



GODPARENTS

Best of all worlds, if they can afford it

Nicholas Coleridge, page 12



OPERA NORTH

Josephine Barstow a blazing Gloriana

Rodney Milnes, Arts page 29



FASHION

Brilliant in black, dressed up or down

Iain R Webb, page 13

30P

THE TIMES

No. 64,831

MONDAY DECEMBER 20 1993

Five escape IRA bomb attack

Reynolds hint on terrorists upsets No 10

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND NICHOLAS WATT

ALBERT Reynolds embarrassed the British Government yesterday by suggesting that it was ready to consider the future of hundreds of IRA prisoners held in British and Irish jails.

The Irish Prime Minister warned of a fierce new security offensive if the IRA rejected the call for peace in Northern Ireland and failed to call off its campaign of terror.

But his statement that the future of IRA prisoners could be looked at in early talks with the Government caused consternation in London, where ministers have repeatedly said that there can be no amnesty.

As Ulster continued to await a full response from the men of violence, the fragility of the peace process was underlined. The IRA set off a big bomb in Londonderry. Five people were treated for shock, but the RUC said that if the car carrying two adults and three children to a Christmas party had passed the scene seconds later there would have been a devastating loss of life. The 500 lb bomb, which could be

As a Londonderry bomb emphasised the fragility of the peace process, Albert Reynolds surprised London officials by raising the future of IRA prisoners

heard ten miles away, was aimed at an army patrol.

In a fresh development last night, John Hume, leader of the nationalist SDLP, disclosed that he had held a secret meeting with Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, since the unveiling of the Anglo-Irish peace agreement last week and voiced the hope that Sinn Féin's response would be "positive."

Mr Hume said they had discussed the declaration and would do so again when Sinn Féin had carried out a study. "I expect them to do so in depth and naturally my hope is that at the end of the day their response will be a positive one."

Mr Reynolds's suggestion that IRA prisoners could benefit from an ending of violence surprised ministers and risked fierce opposition from Conservative and Ulster Unionist MPs.

In the first sign of strain between the two governments since the agreement, Downing Street last night distanced itself from Mr Reynolds's statement, saying there was "no defined agenda" for exploratory talks with Sinn Féin and underlined John Major's opposition to an amnesty.

The seven-page agreement between Mr Reynolds and Mr Major makes no reference to the treatment of prisoners.

The situation was complicated when some Irish officials made plain that Mr Reynolds was not suggesting an amnesty but may have had in mind the length of sentences. Officials suggested that he might have been referring to an easing of parole rules. "It may well be that the ending of violence would create an atmosphere in which we have a lot of model prisoners who would qualify for early release," a senior Irish official said.

Downing Street made plain that the law would have to "take its course" for people charged and convicted under

the criminal law. As Mr Major again sought to reassure Ulster Unionists about the agreement by emphasising that it contained no suggestion of joint Dublin-London authority over the province, Mr Reynolds adopted a stick-and-carrot approach to the IRA and Sinn Féin.

Mr Reynolds said that if violence resumed both governments would be expected to respond and undoubtedly there would be a "stiffer" security response. He said: "The people on the ground would expect us to respond. After such strong support expressed by people in both communities for peace, there will be a reversion at resumption of full-scale violence."

He rejected "interment" which he believed "was the strongest recruiting platform the IRA was ever handed."

Mr Reynolds added: "What the two governments are saying is that if we can have a declaration of a cessation of violence, and if we are satisfied it is for real, then we get down to talk about those matters that count and undoubtedly the future of prisoners would be part of it. I think that is what the British Government would have in mind in exploratory talks with Sinn Féin."

Downing Street did not comment directly, but pointed to the British message to the IRA of November 5, which said that dialogue would explore the basis on which Sinn Féin would be admitted to political talks and exchange views on how it would play a part in the public life of Northern Ireland.

A British official said Mr Reynolds was trying to persuade the IRA of the benefits of the agreement just as the Prime Minister was trying to persuade the Unionists. "But he appears to have gone rather beyond the agreement."

Withdrawal plans, page 2
Peter Riddell, page 14



Sally Becker comforting a boy from Mostar yesterday at the start of the first United Nations evacuation of the wounded in three months

Held hostage by those she came to save

FOR almost two hours yesterday Sally Becker sat in the headquarters of the civilian police in eastern Mostar, effectively held hostage by the people she had come to save.

As sniper bullets cracked around the building, Ms Becker, from Brighton, argued with the civil authorities to allow her access to the hospital from which 44 Bosnians were to be evacuated. Operation Angel was, she said, her creation and hers alone.

"We welcome your arrival here," the police chief said. "And, of course, were it up to us, you would be free to do as you choose. Unfortunately the 4th Corps has recently issued orders that no one may enter the city without informing us 24 hours in advance. I wish that it could be different."

All the weeks of preparation which were to have culminated yesterday in a joyous reunion with the doctors who had effectively saved her life during the most vicious bombardment the city witnessed in October, had come to naught. The United Nations had apparently forgotten to tell Ms Becker about this latest by-law.

Less than a mile away, in the Victorian confines of the war hospital, 21 armoured personnel carriers from the Spanish battalion of the UN protection force had all but



As the desperate were moved to safety, Sally Becker was robbed of her glory. Tom Rhodes writes from Muslim eastern Mostar

finished loading the wounded and their families for the return trip to Metkovic and then to safety in the United States, Spain and Italy. As if to emphasise just how dangerous the snipers of eastern Mostar have become, a soldier arrived at the hospital just as the evacuation started.

Does Sally Becker really help the suffering people of Bosnia?

Page 8

He had been shot in the stomach and doctors pronounced that he had less than a minute to live. There is no lighting or electricity, and heating and water are rare commodities.

In the police station, meanwhile, Ms Becker said she could not believe that the UN had become so deceitful. "I have only come here to evacuate the sick and deliver some supplies and a glimmer of

hope to my friends at the hospital," she pleaded, before jumping from her seat on hearing the convoy below. "Don't let the convoy leave without me. We are stuck in here," she shouted to her colleague, Duncan Stewart, a GP from Brighton.

On the face of it, it seemed that the UN and the UNHCR, both of which have been under attack from Ms Becker since she arrived in Bosnia last week, had stolen the show. Although she had said she would lead the convoy into the ravaged city, she had been placed behind every other vehicle. She had insisted on driving a non-armoured car, the UN said, and that meant they could offer her no protection.

On the way out, she lost her way and entered the compound in Metkovic to find that the cameras were already locked on two patients — one a 12-year-old in a coma, the other a 14-year-old hit in the legs by shells — as they were carried by British paramedics, firemen and volunteers to the ambulances which would

transport them to the airport at Split in Croatia. "I had hoped that we could cement relations and work together," she said, "but now I realise that this is totally impossible. The United Nations is neither honest nor straightforward."

Secretly the UN and its agencies are relieved that Ms Becker will now leave the region. Within the strict legal procedures of third-country evacuations, they said, every attempt had been made to help her passage through a war zone which daily changes its borders and rules with chameleon-like cunning.

They feel that however good her intentions, Ms Becker has not grasped the wider picture and, had she been given a free reign, could have damaged the intricate

negotiating procedures in place. In the six days she has travelled in Bosnia this time, Ms Becker has certainly shown little sign of understanding the complex web of war fought between three sides in which the success of one humanitarian operation is invariably linked to that of another in a completely different theatre of fighting.

Nevertheless, her ability to motivate 200 British volunteers with ambulances and other vehicles was a vital part of yesterday's evacuation. Without them the task could not have been accomplished. Manuel Almeida, UNHCR head of office, said: "The most important thing is that we have managed an evacuation from Mostar for the first time in three months."

Granada's LWT bid snubbed

By JON ASHWORTH

LONDON Weekend Television, maker of *Blind Date* and *The South Bank Show*, has bitterly rejected a hostile takeover approach by Granada, the television rentals-to-leisure group, which makes *Coronation Street*.

In the opening shots today in what is set to be the fiercest battle for a UK television station in more than a decade, LWT rejects Granada's £600 million takeover bid as unwelcome and unwarranted. Sir Christopher Bland, chairman of LWT (folding), said the case for the offer was "thin and unconvincing", singling out the lack of television experience among Granada's directors.

Gerry Robinson, Granada's chief executive, scoffed at claims that the company knows little about television. He pointed out that nearly all the programmes shown on LWT last night were made by Granada.

LWT attack, page 36

Bishop of Durham denies Bible story of Christmas

By RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

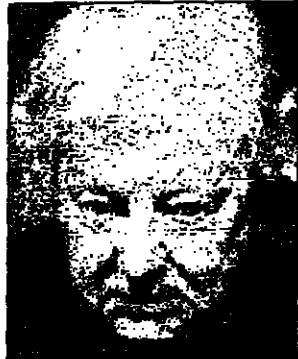
THE Star of Bethlehem did not exist, the Three Wise Men and their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh were mythical, and there really was "no room at the inn" in Bethlehem.

This was the Christmas message yesterday from the Bishop of Durham, Dr David Jenkins. In line with a tradition he has made peculiarly his own, he continued to cast doubt on the basic tenets of the Christian faith.

While Dr Jenkins received support from some senior churchmen, including the Bishop of St Albans, the Right Rev John Taylor, another prominent Anglican, the Environment Secretary, John Gummer, said: "It will be a relief when great events of the Christian year are not hijacked by the Bishop of Durham and his personal publicity machine."

"The teaching of the Church is very clear. All over the world millions will be rejoicing in the supreme fact that God came to earth as a baby, born of the Virgin Mary."

Dr Jenkins's latest challenge to conventional belief came after a week in which he rejected the concept of eternal damnation in hell and the second coming of Christ. The Church of England's doctrine commission is now debating salvation, including the concepts of death, judgement, heaven and hell, and is thought likely also to reject the concept of physical hell fire.



Jenkins: Wise Men "splendidly symbolic"

Dr Jenkins, speaking on BBC's *Breakfast with Frost*, said the account of the star guiding the Three Wise Men to Bethlehem and other parts of the Christmas story were

mythical. Describing some of the stories as "splendidly symbolic", he concluded there was no virgin birth.

He did not believe Three Wise Men delivered gold, frankincense and myrrh to the infant Jesus: people realised over a period who Jesus was, and it would not have been known at his birth. He had also "begun to wonder" about there being no room at the inn. "Who knows?" he said.

Challenging the story of the "star of special brightness" he said: "These stories are so splendidly symbolic and pick up so many echoes both from prophecies and the Old Testament... that I think they are stories composed by the early church out of their faith."

The birth narratives appear only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. In 1986, partly in response to Dr Jenkins's statements, a church report said: "We acknowledge and uphold this the virgin conception as expressing the faith of the Church and its historic teaching."

His remarks provoked an immediate outcry among MPs, although his fellow bishops

Continued on page 2 col 5

It's cold enough for snow after storms

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, TRAVEL CORRESPONDENT

MUCH of Britain may have a white Christmas, weather forecasters predicted yesterday, as storms brought flooding to parts of the country.

A senior forecaster at the London Weather Centre said: "It will certainly be cold enough for snow almost everywhere by the end of the week and it just depends on where the fronts are on whether it snows or not. There is a better chance this year than there has been for a long time in the South and a probability of snow in the North."

Bookmakers William Hill face a loss of £100,000 if the prediction is proved correct. It cut its odds against a white Christmas in any of Britain's main cities from 7-1 to 6-1.

Homes were evacuated and roads closed by floods in Wales, the West Country and West Yorkshire. Winds reached storm force in exposed areas, with gusts of up to 90mph on Cairn Gorm and warnings were given of structural damage throughout much of the Highlands and Grampian region. But in London, temperatures

reached an unseasonably high 15C (nearly 60F), although temperatures are expected to fall sharply today. More rain and strong winds are also forecast with snow expected on high ground.

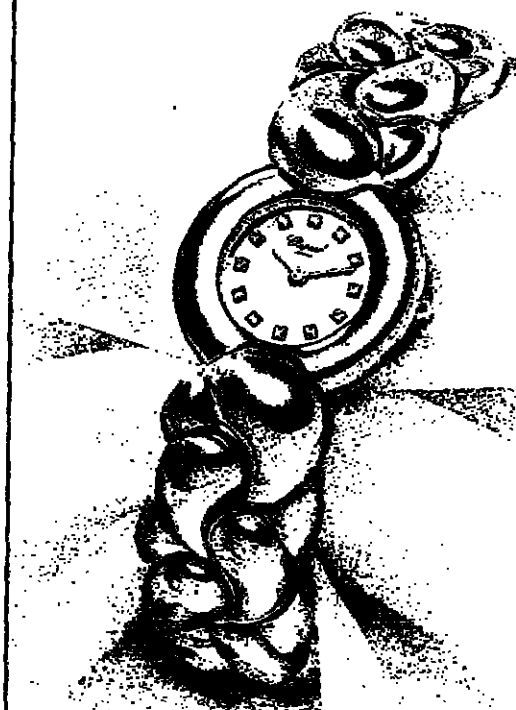
Two army cadet force instructors who died on a weekend training exercise after leaping into the river Nidd in North Yorkshire, were named as Michael Veal, 36, of Hardwick near Cambridge, and Jeremy Lander, 27, from St Ives, Cambridgeshire. They had jumped 60ft into the fast-flowing river wearing wetsuits and lifejackets in a "gorge running" exercise.

A search was called off last night for an angler swept into the sea by a large wave off Flat Rock, near Balcary Point on the Solway Firth.

Dangerous seas also prevented the traditional delivery of Christmas presents to lighthousekeepers at The Needles, the last time before the lighthouse is automated next year. A further attempt will be made when the weather eases.

Forecast, page 18

Chopard
GENÈVE
depuis 1860



La Collection
CASHMIR



Chopard Boutique - 14 New Bond Street - London - Tel. 071 409 3140 and leading watch-specialists throughout the United Kingdom.

Reading The Times overseas
Australia \$20.00; Belgium 20.00; Canada \$22.00; Denmark 25.00; France 18.00; Germany 22.00; Greece 20.00; Ireland 20.00; Italy 20.00; Japan 20.00; Luxembourg 20.00; Netherlands 20.00; Norway 20.00; Portugal 20.00; Spain 20.00; Sweden 20.00; Switzerland 20.00; Taiwan 20.00; USA \$20.00.



770140 046411

Search for peace continues as community prays that men of violence have seen the light

Cabinet group lays plans to withdraw troops from Ulster

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

CONTINGENCY plans for an eventual phased withdrawal of the majority of troops from Northern Ireland have been drawn up by a Cabinet working group chaired by Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary.

The Cabinet ministers, who included Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, and Malcolm Rifkind, the Defence Secretary, began discussing the plans two months ago.

A graduated programme under which the army's profile would change and its presence would be reduced was apparently agreed in principle in anticipation of progress in the negotiations between London and Dublin.

Withdrawal of some of the 18,000 troops in Northern Ireland would only be sanctioned once a "genuine and established" ceasefire existed

throughout the province. Under the contingency plans discussed by the ministers, the first step would entail all soldiers in the province wearing berets instead of helmets. Soldiers in several parts of Ulster areas already wear berets where this is felt appropriate and safe.

After a suitable period when the Royal Ulster Constabulary felt confident about patrolling the streets without army back-up, the soldiers would return to barracks in similar fashion to army units in mainland garrison towns.

The timetable for a long-term withdrawal would partly depend on the availability of barracks on the mainland.

With soldiers returning from Germany and other parts of the world there could be a dearth of suitable barracks.

The detailed contingency

plans were based on proposals first put forward by Sir Patrick in a speech in Coleraine in December last year when the IRA was believed to be considering a ceasefire. Sir Patrick said then that the army would "return to its garrison role, as in the rest of the United Kingdom", if the terrorists renounced the use and threat of violence. Dealing with a central IRA demand, Sir Patrick had said that, after a "genuine and established cessation of violence", the "routine support of the armed forces would no longer be required".

The army was deployed in reinforced strength in Ulster in 1969 after the RUC had proved unable to control rioting. Before that, three or four battalions, totalling about 2,500 soldiers, were kept in barracks in the province.

The army took over responsibility for maintaining public order from the police. Army numbers peaked at 22,000 in 1972 when soldiers were used to break up "no-go areas" in Belfast and Londonderry.

In 1976 under a policy called "The Way Ahead", the RUC resumed primacy over the army and the troops took on a supporting role. There are currently six resident regular battalions who serve for up to two and a half years, six short-tour battalions on duty for six months, and six Royal Irish Regiment home service battalions, some part-time, who live in the province.

Candle of hope flickers in province

FROM ALAN HAMILTON IN DUNGANNON

IN THE churches of Dungannon, Co Tyrone, yesterday, the lesson for the fourth Sunday in Advent was from Isaiah: "The people walking in darkness had seen a great light." Set against the prophetic coming of Christ, the people of Northern Ireland see the coming of permanent peace as a flickering candle whose glow remains beset by shadows.

Morning mass in the soaring Victorian gothic of St Patrick's Roman Catholic church was disturbed four times by the passage of army helicopters overhead. Father Joe McKeever pressed on undaunted, enjoining his packed congregation to pray for world peace, but nothing more geographically specific. A new peace initiative there might be, but he had delivered more than enough homilies on the topic.

Down the hill at the Presbyterian church, the Rev Norman Harrison took a similar view. He managed to squeeze in a prayer for the Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary, and for a successful outcome to the new initiative. Perhaps that was because his church windows have been blown out 28 times.

Dungannon, a town of 20,000 evenly divided between Protestant and Catholic, is where Ulster's recent trouble began 25 years ago. Austin Currie, a local councillor, led a squat in an empty council house to protest at the discrimination against Catholics on the housing list. The squat began a protest march, which began the civil rights movement, which began a quarter century of killing.

Some things have changed in 25 years. Housing discrimination has ended, but what has not changed is a high level of unemployment — running at 18 per cent.

Pat Killen, a Roman Catholic, is managing director of Tyrone Crystal. Now with a workforce of 200, it exports nearly half its production to the United States. He said: "Every time I go to America,



A young girl lights a candle for peace in Northern Ireland at Dungannon's Roman Catholic church yesterday

people don't ask me about my products, they ask if we are still killing each other. I believe a secured peace would make the biggest difference to employment."

Mr Killen said he had spoken to nobody who was not in favour of the initiative.

"There is something in it for everybody. The minority have the guarantee of a seat at the table, to keep the Irish dimension. The majority have the guarantee of the Union as long as they want it."

Ralph Brown, a Unionist businessman with a store in Scotch Street, said: "You cannot but condemn the peace process: it would be wonderful if the two policemen murdered at Fivemiletown were the last deaths. But even if it is successful and the killing stops, it will take a generation for mutual suspicion to die."

Mr Brown, a Dungannon councillor, believed the peace process is beset by difficulties. "One of the greatest is the fact

that Sinn Féin and the IRA are far more synonymous than is usually portrayed. It is a lot to ask in such a short time, to put aside history and sit down with them."

Suspensions also abound over the conduct and motives of the British Government. Unionists expressed dismay at the recent disclosure of secret contacts between Westminster and Sinn Féin.

Some sense history repeating itself. Nationalists recall Lloyd George's ultimatum to

the Irish delegation at the time of partition: "Sign this, or it's war in three days." Mr Major, they suspect, may be saying the same thing, if more subtly.

The ninth chapter of Isaiah, set so grandly to soaring chorus by Handel, continues: "Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end." Six days before Christmas in Dungannon, the question of whose government will bring peace without end remains unresolved.

Men of the Maze to have their say

By NICHOLAS WATT, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

GERRY Adams, the Sinn Féin leader, faces one of the most formidable challenges in his 20 years at the forefront of the republican movement as he works out a response to the Downing Street declaration.

One of the main republican groups whose views will be central is the 600 IRA prisoners in Britain, Ireland, other European countries and America. Sinn Féin signalled the importance of their role when a copy of the declaration was rushed to the Maze prison near Belfast within hours of Wednesday's meeting.

This was delivered to Danny Morrison, the party's former publicity director, who is serving eight years. He made the famous remark in 1981 that republicans would take power in Ireland "with an Armalite in one hand and a ballot paper in the other".

Mr Adams will need all his

skills as a negotiator to avoid exacerbating the deep divisions within the republican movement. His dilemma is simple. If he accepts the agreement, even with guarantees and concessions, he risks alienating IRA hardliners who could break away.

If Mr Adams rejects the declaration, he will squander an historic opportunity for peace and condemn his supporters to many more years of fruitless violence.

One Sinn Féin supporter

said: "I would say that 90 per cent of my friends in the party support the peace process. We are sick of the violence. But it is right that Gerry takes his time to respond — he can't turn round after 20 years and reply in two days."

But he added: "There are hardened republicans who will stop at nothing until they achieve a united Ireland."



Mayhew: put forward proposals a year ago

Major in talks on GCHQ unions

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

JOHN Major will today insist that the Government will not compromise security at its GCHQ intelligence centre.

In the first talks on the GCHQ spy centre since unions were banned from it 10 years ago, Mr Major will tell Civil Service union leaders that the Government's primary intention is to maintain operations and security at the Cheltenham base and its string of outstations.

The talks between Mr Major and union leaders are the clearest signal yet of how close the Government is towards the restoration of trade union recognition at GCHQ.

Unions were banned from GCHQ in January 1984, following claims that its operations had been disrupted by Civil Service industrial action in 1979-81.

Staff were offered £1,000 to give up their union membership. The Civil Service unions have maintained the ban, who refused to do so and pursued the case through the European courts and the United Nations' International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Mr Major is not expected today to offer the unions full restoration of recognition but he is likely to propose closer relationships with the GCHQ Staff Federation.

The proposal has been drawn up in an effort by the Government to avert condemnation by the ILO, although this will not attract right wing Conservatives who will see any move by the Prime Minister towards re-unionisation of GCHQ as a clear sign of weakness.

Mr Major may cause the unions real difficulty if he proposes that the final power of decision over the staff federation should be removed from John Adeney, GCHQ's director. If Mr Major did so the way would be cleared for the federation to be given a formal legal certificate of independence as a trade union by Ted Whybrow, the Government's Certification Officer.

The Certification Office has refused to issue such a certificate while GCHQ's director effectively holds a veto on the staff federation's activities. Granting the federation full independence would, in effect, provide for the re-unionisation of GCHQ — though not by the unions which were originally ejected from it.

Such a move would then place the onus of decision back on the unions. The unions could also be thrown into disarray if the Government, as an alternative, asks them to sign a no-strike deal.

Bishop denies Bible story of Christmas

Continued from page 1
seemed sanguine. Dame Jill Knight (C, Edgbaston) said: "The Bishop does no good to the Church. For centuries, faithful people have believed that the Bible spoke the truth. He seems determined to destroy the faith of those simple believers."

Geoffrey Dickens (C, Littleborough and Saddleworth) said: "He is destroying the faith of millions of believers." Anglican bishops were reluctant to counter the attack. Traditionalists and evangelicals are looking forward to his retirement next year and believe the best policy is to keep silent. Many liberals

secretly agree with all he says. But Bishop Taylor, a member of the doctrine commission, blamed the media for resurrecting Dr Jenkins's remarks on hell, originally made some weeks ago at a lay readers' conference in the Rochester diocese.

There was more support for the bishop from a senior church spokesman last night. He said: "Dr Jenkins is deeply concerned to communicate the Christian faith in a way that he feels is intellectually acceptable for today. He will stimulate some. He will antagonise others. He is certainly successful in creating debate about matters of Christian faith."

Colleges face squeeze on student places

Universities will have the number of students they enrol tightly controlled and face financial penalties if they exceed their quotas under a system to be announced by their funding council today. Those who ignored instructions to cut back this year will have to reduce their intakes by at least 5 per cent next summer.

The restrictions make it almost inevitable that university entry will become more difficult next year. Applications are up again and the most popular universities already have more than ten candidates for each place.

Carpet death charge

A man is to appear in court today over the death of a woman aged 77 whose body was found last Thursday wrapped in a carpet near Loch Striven in a remote part of the Cowal peninsula, Argyll. She was identified yesterday as Annie Quinn who vanished on November 2 after leaving her home at Dunoon to visit her husband Jimmy in a nursing home.

Inmates to be given keys

Patients at Broadmoor top security hospital are to be given keys to their rooms to boost their sense of responsibility. A spokesman for the Prison Officers' Association condemned the move: "Some of the more psychotic patients may choose to stay up all night. That is going to cause conflict with those who want to go to bed early for some peace and quiet."

Terrorist alert hits BR

Rail commuters travelling into London from Kent and the south-eastern suburbs may face delays today after a terrorist alert disrupted services across the capital yesterday. Police searched the London Bridge to Sevenoaks line after a bomb warning but no devices were found. Network SouthEast said some lines could still be disrupted today.

Edward 'in love' claim



Andrew Morton, author of *Diana — Her True Story*, claims that Prince Edward, left, is in love with a public relations consultant. Buckingham Palace declined to comment on the suggestion in yesterday's *News of the World* that the Prince might marry Sophie Rhys-Jones, of West Kensington, London. Morton predicts that the Prince will announce his engagement on his birthday in March.

School ends beagling

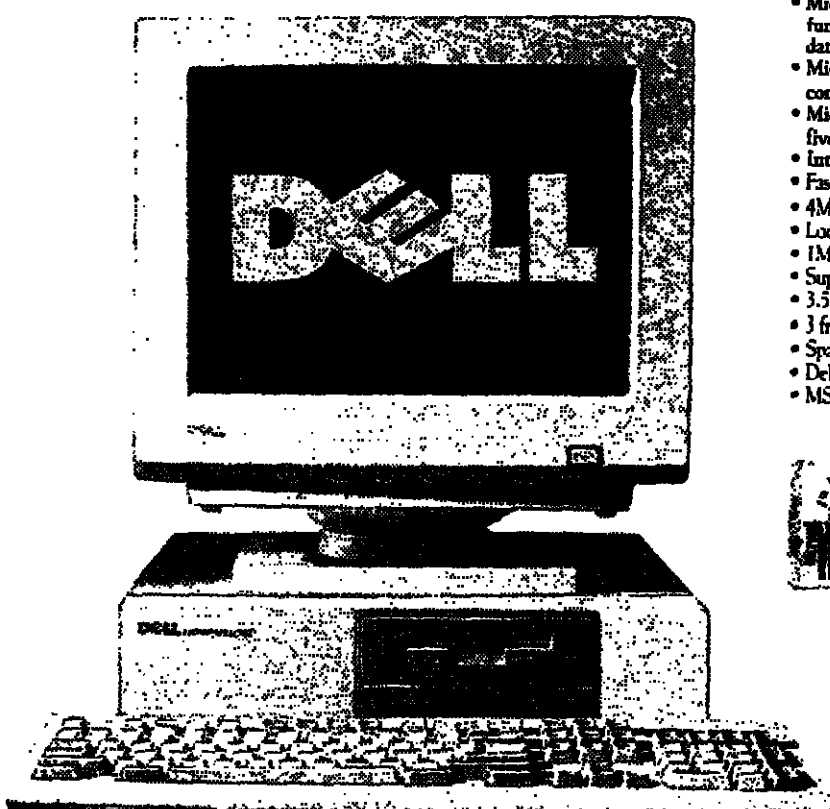
Ampleforth College in North Yorkshire is to stop funding its beagling pack in May because of lack of interest. This season, only four out of 600 pupils have regularly followed the pack, which has existed for 80 years. Hunt supporters from outside have been invited to take over the running of the school's 40 hounds elsewhere.

"Where on earth can I get a serious PC that doesn't cost the earth?"

INTRODUCING DELL DIMENSION.
THE SERIOUS PC THAT DOESN'T COST THE EARTH.

DELL DIMENSION 425si
£879+VAT excl. delivery

- Microsoft® Works for Windows with highly functional wordprocessor, spreadsheet, charting, database and drawing applications
- Microsoft Money, a great tool to allow you total control of your personal finances
- Microsoft Arcade lets you relax and reminisce with five classic 80's Arcade games including Asteroids
- Intel® 486™ SX 25MHz processor
- Fast 120MB Hard Drive
- 4MB RAM, upgradeable to 32MB
- Local Bus Graphics
- Super VGA Colour Monitor
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 1 free 16-bit ISA slots
- SpaceSaver Keyboard
- Dell Mouse
- MS-DOS and Windows



DELL
TO ORDER, CALL
0344 720000
Between 9am and 5pm weekdays.
10am to 4pm Saturdays.

Every Dell Dimension system comes with the peace of mind you would expect from the UK's largest PC manufacturer in the world, including the award-winning Technical Support hotline, available from 9am to 5pm weekdays and one year's warranty. "Call and Return" service. Dell is a registered trademark of the Dell Computer Corporation 1992. Intel, Intel Inside, Intel 486, Pentium, Overdrive are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation. All trademarks acknowledged. Delivery is charged at £20 + VAT per system. Prices correct at 23.11.93. Dell Retail is offered subject to actual business trading 3 years or more.

تحت الاصل

Back-to-basics Conservative policies promote superficial and short-term approach to social order

Why the New Right is wrong for Britain today

British life is suffering from normlessness... from the lack of a clear public framework of norms or beliefs. This lack is far more dangerous than is generally realised. The Government makes much of its concern for social order, especially since the relative success of Labour's attempt to seize the high ground on law and order. But the Government's approach is superficial and short-term. It is incoherent, and the incoherence reveals a fatal flaw in the politics of the Thatcherite New Right.

If every stable social order rests finally on shared beliefs, that is all the more true of a society that prizes individual freedom, the rule of law and a limited role for the state. Such a society, in attempting to reduce the role of coercion or state power to a minimum, puts a premium on self-regulation or self-discipline. But in the name of what public or shared beliefs can self-regulation in Britain now occur?

We live in a multicultural or pluralist society. Does that imply that there are no limits to pluralism, that public norms or beliefs are now dispensable? Obviously not. The inheritors of Thatcherism come up against a serious problem here. How do they propose to contain pluralism within morally acceptable limits?

The Government's social programme rests on a false assumption that the British live by a code derived from the Ealing comedies. Larry Siedentop argues

its and foster social order? Often they seem to rely simply on economic incentives, the division of labour and the repressive apparatus of the state. At a more philosophical level, what they are peddling is perhaps a form of utilitarianism.

Even more paradoxically, the thinking of the New Right bears the imprint of Marxism. That discredited doctrine survives in the New Right in the form of a reductionist account of the nature of a free society — in the description relied upon by proponents of market solutions to defend their system. They call it capitalism.

That description of what should be called a free society reeks of economic determinism, of the assumption that the economic level is the crucial or determining level in human affairs and that other matters follow necessarily from economic relationships. By implication, it underplays the importance not only of legal arrangements, but also of shared beliefs or public norms that are the crucial sources of

social order. This bizarre mixture of utilitarianism and Marxism helps to explain why the New Right has no resources for dealing with the issue of social order apart from the market incentives and the repressive role of law. The same thing emerges clearly in the New Right's on-

The Times Essay

slaught on social liberalism. While defending market freedoms and relying almost exclusively on economic discourse, the New Right lashes out at the excessive freedom that it claims has been the result of social liberalism.

It is a dangerous strategy to adopt because it draws attention away from the need for a normative framework that can

begin to legitimise market freedoms and personal ambitions by helping to moralise them: a rights-based liberal constitution.

Turning social liberalism into the enemy obliges the New Right to fall back on a traditional or (in its terms) pre-capitalist residue of beliefs and practices on notions such as "gentlemanly" or "decent" and "common sense". But what does gentlemanly or decent conjure up in the minds of a new underclass, and what sense is common to a Bradford Muslim and a Guildford marion?

Two ambiguous recent announcements illustrate the problem. The first, from the Government, is that henceforth the higher purpose of social policy will be "back to basics". The second announcement is that a film producer is now determined to recreate the genre of Ealing comedies, with their celebration of quintessentially British qualities.

Though in no way coordinated, these two announcements reveal a dangerous muddle. It is hardly fanciful to see the Government's back to basics programme as projecting images derived from the Ealing comedies on to the future. Evidently, those images are meant to convey a lost innocence, a

more wholesome world. Exactly why does that world, with its fair array of villains, seem more wholesome?

Back to basics presupposes that there was a coherent code of a shared morality. Yet was there ever such a thing? Yes, a kind of code can be observed in the delightful Ealing comedies. But it is not really a moral code.

Rather, it is a code of manners founded on relations of deference and superiority, a code that does have one striking

characteristic. The humour and gentleness, even the chicane, which mark the Ealing comedies depended on clear-cut roles being unhesitatingly accepted and therefore on limited ambition.

In that respect, these comedies did reflect accurately English society when it was still in an aristocratic mould. That pattern has been destroyed by Thatcherism. The historical role of Thatcherism was to turn the

market from a merely economic device into a social gospel that aimed to raise ambitions — to avert the threat of socialism by making everyone feel part of the market system and a beneficiary of exchange relationships. But that gospel, by implication, undermined the pattern of deference and superiority that had long survived the achievement of equality before the law in Britain.

By destroying the clear-cut identities that had marked a residually aristocratic society, identities which sustained social order through the subtle system of cues and accents, inclusions and exclusions that govern intercourse in the Ealing comedies, Thatcherism undermined the limits on ambition which such a system imposed. When people no longer feel fixed into a particular social position, they are free to imagine themselves in others, to aspire to wealth, power and status. Comparing what they have with what they might have, their wants multiply. The multiplication of wants creates not only a far more dynamic society but also a more anxious one.

What does social order rest on when a traditional pattern of superiority and deference disappears and with it the precisely articulated roles that curbed ambitions? That is the question which Thatcherism and the New Right fail to address. While liberating large sections of society from the weight of deference and lack of self-confidence that had earlier kept them submissive, they merely present society as a cockpit, where the interplay of personal ambition and money within a legal framework results in outcomes that cannot be morally criticised.

But that is not an adequate basis for a social order. That is why the New Right has been forced to fall back, for want of anything better, on fictitious

basics as a kind of *deus ex machina* to produce social order.

Thatcherism and the New Right have singly failed to understand that liberal idealism — what they dismiss as social liberalism — offers the only long-term hope of founding a social order on individual freedom. Liberalism properly understood is not a soft option or easy way out. Far from avoiding the issue of social order, as many of its critics suggest, it alone addresses the issue in a plausible way. Social liberalism makes it clear that the only reliable basis for order in a free society is self-discipline.

That is the ultimate role of the written constitutions embodying characters of rights adopted by most Western liberal democracies. Their emphasis on reciprocity, and on the duties to others that are entailed by enjoying rights, lays a burden on the individual conscience which is both the price and the glory of a free society. A free society eschews paternalism, but provides a clear framework for legitimate ambition, thus helping agents to shoulder the burden of anxiety that is the concomitant of freedom.

Normlessness is a threat to freedom. The market is not enough. But the answer is not to daydream about an Ealing comedy world of shabby gentility.

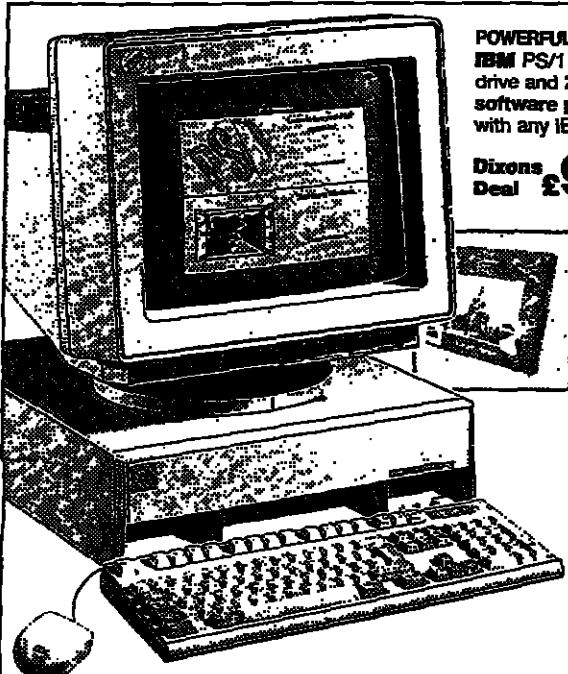
Of course there is a sting in the tail of this argument. It is that achieving a clear liberal identity for Britain requires major reforms: attending to the inadequacies of an unwritten constitution and taking the preconditions of equal opportunity seriously.

□ Larry Siedentop is a lecturer in politics at Keele, Oxford. His study, *Teoculus*, will be published in March (OUP).

Peter Riddell, page 14



The status quo once personified by Alec Guinness in *Kind Hearts and Coronets* cannot be revived in the Nineties



POWERFUL 486SX PERSONAL COMPUTER
IBM PS/1 540, 25MHz with 85Mb hard drive and 2Mb RAM. Plus Disney software pack. (£949.99 when bought with any IBM PC)

Dixons Deal £949.99

REMOTE CONTROL CD MINI HI-FI
SONY MHC30
Save £50. Was £379.99

Dixons Deal £329.99



THE SMALLEST MOBILE PHONE
IN THE WORLD
SONY GM300

Dixons Deal £499.99

PLUS UP TO £150
CHEQUEBACK



ALL THE LATEST ZOOM
COMPACT FEATURES
MINOLTA
70C 35mm with power zoom lens.
SAVE £60. Was £179.99

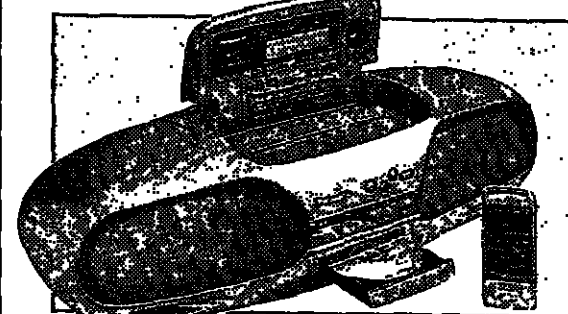
Christmas gifts at Dixons. You couldn't be in better hands.

At Dixons we've got Christmas all wrapped up. Everything from Sony's incredible Digital Recording MiniDisc to the smallest mobile phone around, notepad computers, zoom cameras, camcorders, games not to mention the latest in TV and Video technology. All this and amazing deals too, Dixons - Happy Christmas Shopping.

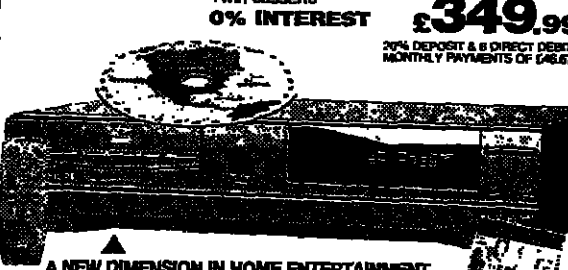
UP TO 18 MONTHS 0% INTEREST
ON ALL* CAMCORDERS, CAMERAS, TVs, VIDEOS, SATELLITE
TV AND HI-FI OVER £200 PLUS ALL PACKARD BELL
AND APPLE MACINTOSH DESKTOP COMPUTERS
*Excluding some Sony and Kenwood products

Dixons
UNBEATABLE CHRISTMAS DEALS

AROUND 380 BRANCHES NATIONWIDE. TEL: 08-500 0200 FOR YOUR NEAREST BRANCH
We don't own Dixons. Dixons is a brand name. We are a company that sells Dixons products. Other terms apply in all branches. Reproduction and sale of this material is strictly prohibited.



NEW 'COBRA TOP' DESIGN REMOTE
CONTROL PORTABLE CD SYSTEM
PANASONIC RDT 707
Twin cassette
0% INTEREST
Dixons Deal £349.99



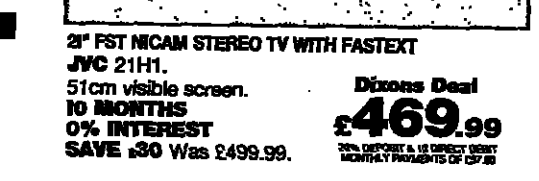
A NEW DIMENSION IN HOME ENTERTAINMENT
PHILIPS CDi Save up to £150.
When bought with Compton Interactive Encyclopedia. Total Separate Selling Price £599.98
Dixons Deal £449.95



THE MOST USER-FRIENDLY
CAMCORDER EVER
SHARP ViewCam VLE30H
3" LCD low reflective, high brightness colour monitor
0% INTEREST
Dixons Deal £899.99



SONY M21 Digital Recording
MiniDisc Walkman
Limited offer includes:
Compilation minidisc, 5 blank minidiscs, 10x12 music vouchers
off pre-recorded minidiscs.
Dixons Deal £500
LARGER STORES ONLY



21" FST NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTEXT
JVC 21H11.
51cm visible screen.
10 MONTHS
0% INTEREST
SAVE £30 Was £499.99.
Dixons Deal £469.99



UNIQUE AUTO-SET VIDEO WITH BUILT-IN VIDEOPLUS
AMSTRAD UF40
automatically tunes
to TV channels and sets
date and time.
0% INTEREST
Dixons Deal £329.99



ANOTHER CLASSIC
DISNEY GAME
ALADDIN
for Sega Mega Drive
or Super Nintendo
Dixons Deal £49.99 each



AMSTRAD PEN PAD 800
Pocket size electronic
organiser with pen based input
Dixons Deal £299.99
PLUS CD TRADE-IN BY DIRECT REDEMPTION
for a further

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Groningen qualifier

THE Professional Chess Association qualifier for the World Chess Championship began yesterday in this town in North Holland. Late entrants for the competition include Evgeny Barev (Russia), Kiril Georgiev (Bulgaria), Alexander Khalifman (Russia), Boris Gulko (USA), Simeon Agdestein (Norway) and Lubomir Ljubojevic (former Yugoslavia). Britain is represented by grandmasters Michael Adams and Julian Hodgson. Adams is in excellent form, as can be seen from the following win against one of his leading competitors. The diagram position shows the moment when Adams launched the attack that shattered Vladimir Kramnik's position.

White: Vladimir Kramnik (Russia)

Black: Michael Adams (UK)

Biel 1993

English Opening

1 Nf3 Nf6
2 c4 d6
3 g3 c5
4 Bg2 Bg7
5 O-O Bg7
6 Nc3 Bg7
7 d4 cxd4
8 Qxd4 O-O
9 Qh4 d6
10 Bb2 Nbd7
11 Bc3 Rf8
12 Bg7 Kf7
13 Qd4 Bc5
14 Ra1 Rb8
15 b4 Rb8
16 a3 Rb8
17 e4 Cc7
18 Nc5 Qb8
19 Bb3 Rcd8
20 Nc2 Bb8
21 Bg2 a6
22 Nc3 Rb8

23 R4 Rcd8

24 Kf1 Nf6

25 Q4 Nd4

Diagram after Black's 25th move



26 Nd4 e5
27 Qd2 exd4
28 Qd4 Ne5
29 Rb2 Qc7
30 Nc2 Qc7
31 g5 b5
32 Rf1 b5
33 h4 Bb7
34 Kf2 Rb6
35 cxb6 axb6
36 Bf1 Rb6
37 Rb2 Rb6
38 Rcd8 Qc7
39 Nc3 Qc7
40 Na5 Bc7
41 Be2 Qc4
42 Kf2 Qb2
43 Qf2 Qx3
44 Qf6 Qh3+
45 Kf2 Qh4+
46 Kf3 h5
47 Nc7 Qe1

White resigns

Hastings

Britain's premier all-play-all tournament starts at Hastings on December 29 and runs until January 6, with the general congress continuing until January 9. The line-up has been announced and includes grandmasters John Nunn, Ian Rogers, Matthew Sadler, the British champion Michael Hennigan, and Kevan Arakhamia, one of the foremost female players from Georgia.

Kitchen

AN OLD...
The back of the...
countryside...
at an...
idea of the...
bought by the...
Society...
prevalent...
a...
preparation...
place at a...
importance...
identified by...
Halls Fine...
in to value it...
He said...
was the first...
quality and...
mounted but...
of the paper...

Rightwingers urge Patten to rewrite school timetable

By JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

INFLUENTIAL Conservatives today launch a campaign for an even more radical shake-up of the national curriculum than envisaged in the Government this week.

Dr Sheila Lawlor, deputy director of the Centre for Policy Studies, has told John Patten, the Education Secretary, that the plans disclosed in last Friday's *Times* do not go far enough. She says in a letter published today that "radical rethinking" is needed to halt educational decline.

The proposals, which will be published in the new year, form the final part of Sir Ron Dearing's review of the curriculum and its tests. The curriculum would be revised by Easter to reduce compulsory teaching in most subjects and give schools more flexibility.

Beyond the age of 14, only mathematics, science, English and physical education would remain compulsory, although pupils would have to take short courses in technology and a foreign language, as well as religious education, careers and sex education.

Sir Ron's aim is to create a system from 14 to 19 allowing for more specialisation, especially in vocational subjects. However, he regards immediate implementation of this as impractical, and his report will relegate the introduction of vocational streams from 14 to a "medium-term objective". He favours a continental-style system of job-related courses, but sees the development of suitable syllabuses as a lengthy operation.

Alan Smithers, professor of education at Manchester University, welcomed the approach. He said yesterday: "The way vocational courses are structured at present, they do not stretch people. I am all

Proposals that the Government should make vocational specialisation by over-14s a medium-term objective are under attack

in favour of providing a focus for 14 and 15-year-olds who want something different to the present school curriculum, but we have to put in place good vocational education if it is going to succeed."

Dr Lawlor said Sir Ron's proposals would perpetuate the comprehensive model, rather than offering the variety of schooling necessary. Pupils should be given the choice of vocational or academic education, rather than all following the same basic curriculum.

Dr Lawlor told Mr Patten that many Conservatives would be worried by the proposals to make only piecemeal modifications to the curriculum. "We fear that if the government continues to impose a flawed system... standards will decline, schools and teachers will be forced into a straitjacket of dull mediocrity, and parents, whose children are educated in maintained schools, will be denied the choice of education which you and your predecessors have fought so hard to give them."

Education, page 28



Lawlor: warned Patten of falling standards

Sterilised couple have two more children

By A STAFF REPORTER

A COUPLE who had two children after undergoing sterilisation operations plan to sue a health authority in the High Court for £50,000 compensation.

Jill and Christopher Spratley decided to have the operations to prevent further pregnancies after the births of their first two children, Richard, now 17, and Marisa, 16.

Mrs Spratley was ill throughout her first two pregnancies and also suffered a still birth.

Her husband was sterilised at Heatherwood Hospital in Ascot, Berkshire. Mrs Spratley, 37, of Bracknell, Berkshire, later became pregnant with Craig, now 11.

She said: "The hospital couldn't give us an explanation. Then I decided to be sterilised because we thought three was enough. The sterilisation was a success for nine years and then I got pregnant again. The couple's last child, Kia, was born two years ago.

"I didn't realise I was pregnant at first," Mrs Spratley said. "I'd been under the hospital's care anyway because they were going to give me a hysterectomy for medical reasons.

"Before they would do that, they said I had to have a pregnancy test. I thought it would be stupid, but I went to my GP and he did two tests which showed I was pregnant.

"He wasn't satisfied so he sent me to the hospital for a scan and there was Kia on the screen."

Mr and Mrs Spratley issued a High Court writ against East Berkshire Health Authority for more than £50,000 compensation. They are suing for loss of earnings and because Mrs Spratley will not be able to work while Kia is young.

A Heatherwood Hospital spokesman said it had not received the writ, but confirmed that the hospital had been contacted by Mrs Spratley's solicitors.

Custody-battle boy sues law officer

By LIN JENKINS

A BOY aged 12 whose American father spent nine years in a legal battle over custody is planning to sue the Official Solicitor for failing to act in his best interests.

The action, in which the boy will seek damages against Peter Harris and his predecessor in the post, David Venables, will be the first taken by a child against the senior legal officer.

The boy, who is a ward of court and cannot be named, maintains that court proceedings concerning him went against the spirit of the Children Act 1989, which is based on the principle that the wish of the child should be heeded.

Under the Act, there has been a spate of legal actions from children demanding to live with an adult of their choice, in some cases gaining a "divorce" from their parents.

The child now lives with his father, a jazz pianist and computer expert, after running away from his mother. A court endorsed his decision in October. At earlier hearings, he was represented by the Official Solicitor and refused separate representation despite the fact that the Official Solicitor's recommendations did not reflect his own wishes.

During the legal battle, the boy, who has joint British and

American nationality, was at times prevented from making frequent visits to his grandparents in the United States and was stopped from seeing his father for seven months.

His father, who campaigns for the group Families Need Fathers, said: "My son wanted to go to one of two state schools which have a good reputation for music and the court stopped him. He is now at the school of his choice."

"It was only this year at my insistence that a judge actually spoke to him about what he wanted. The Official Solicitor did not reflect his wishes and understandably my son is very angry about it."

The whole case stinks. It has cost the taxpayer probably £500,000 and we still have the situation where we have to give the court 45 days' notice before we go abroad."

Father and son are today seeing a solicitor to begin proceedings against Mr Harris. The case began nine years ago when the boy's parents split. At first, the boy made fortnightly visits to his father but the couple's failure to agree led to numerous court hearings. "The whole thing has injured his relationship with his mother and my son believes he has grounds to sue," the father said.

Shooting ruling puts birds in firing line

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

TWO dead birds could have cooked the goose of legislation protecting Britain's rarest species. On Friday, Daniel Quinn, a Scottish tenant farmer, was cleared of the charge of killing two barnacle geese, despite evidence given by his landlord, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

Mr Quinn, 48, argued that he was entitled to shoot barnacle geese — a species protected under British and European Community legislation — because of a provision in the Wildlife and Countryside Act

allowing unlicensed shooting where severe damage to crops can be proved.

At his trial in Dumfries, the sheriff ruled for an acquittal after David Brown, an official from the Scottish Office Agriculture and Fisheries Department, said damage had been done to the land Mr Quinn farms near the Solway Firth.

Dr Myrfin Owen, director general of the trust, said yesterday: "I am dismayed to hear of this acquittal. The future looks grim for so-called protected species."



Natasha Diot at the student memory championships in London yesterday. The winner was Jonathan Hancock, of Oxford University, who among other feats memorised a randomly shuffled pack of cards within four minutes

NEWS IN BRIEF

Virus kills eight at care home

A flu-type virus has killed eight elderly patients in ten days at a convalescent home.

Health officials have carried out tests on the virus at the French home in Brighton, East Sussex.

The home is owned by the French government and most of the patients are French. The dead were three men and five women. Police have ruled out suspicious circumstances.

Three held

Three men arrested in connection with the killing in October of John Reynolds, a wealthy businessman, near his home in Rushden, Northamptonshire, were being questioned by police last night.

High anxiety

Police at Manchester airport boarded a British Airways jet when it landed from New York yesterday and detained one man. Another was taken to hospital with a suspected broken nose.

Raiders shoot

Four men were under arrest after a gang who robbed customers at a wine bar in Southwark, London, opened fire at police chasing them on foot and by car. No one was hit.

All-year Santa

A retired Royal Navy officer, Andrew Clark, 67, has taken up residence at a theme park at Aviemore, Highland, as Britain's only full-time Father Christmas.

Garage stolen

Thieves who dismantled and carried off Ruth Greenfield's garage at Moreton Valence, Gloucestershire, left nothing behind but an old umbrella.

Bond winners

Winners in the National Savings premium bond weekly draw are: £100,000: 28PL 974785 (winners in Edinburgh, value of holding £280); £50,000: 14WN 640941 (Somerset, £630); £25,000: 6LT 687876 (Leicester, £671).

Independent seeks backer

By BRIAN MACARTHUR

WITH sales falling to crisis levels on both weekdays and Sundays, a board meeting of Newspaper Publishing, owner of *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*, will decide tomorrow whether to begin negotiations over a minority shareholding worth more than £10 million with three of Britain's biggest newspaper groups.

They are United Newspapers, owner of the *Daily and Sunday Express*, Mirror Group Newspapers, and *The Daily Telegraph*, owned by Conrad Black.

As a rival option, the board will also consider a business

plan presented by Patrick Morrissey, the chief executive, which would require support from City institutions rather than newspaper publishers. The plan would involve severe cuts in editorial costs. Some members of the board will object that *The Independent* needs a long-term plan and that City institutions seek a short-term return.

If that view is upheld, Andreas Whitam Smith, the editor-in-chief, will argue that a new minority stake for a British newspaper group is preferable to savage editorial cuts. His view is shared by the paper's two biggest investors,

Spain's *El Pais* and *La Repubblica* of Italy, who with Mr Whitam Smith and Matthew Symonds, his co-founder, own 48 per cent of the shares. The Italians and Spaniards would control more than half the shares if the board backs Mr Whitam Smith's preferred option. He has been talking to Lord Stevens, chairman of United Newspapers, as well as David Montgomery, chief executive of MGN, and Mr Black. If the Whitam Smith option is backed, *The Independent* would share printing and distribution facilities with its new partner.

Homeless threatened by legal shake-up

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

THE homeless could lose the automatic right to a council property in a shake-up of housing policy being planned for the new year.

Under proposals which will appear in a consultation paper within the next few weeks, more of the homeless, including single mothers, would be housed in short-term private accommodation.

Sir George Young, housing minister, pledged at the Conservative Party conference in October that he would tackle the "unfairness" of the present system.

Legislation will be needed because local authorities are now required to place the "statutorily homeless" — including single parents and other vulnerable groups — on council house waiting lists, often in front of couples who have been there a long time.

The changes will mean that more of the homeless, including single mothers, will go to temporary homes which are leased from the private sector, or to housing association properties.

Sir George said at the conference: "How do we explain to the young couple who want to wait for a home before they start a family that they cannot be rehoused ahead of the unmarried teenager expecting her first, probably unplanned, child?"

There are also expected to be tighter checks on claims by children that they have been thrown out by their parents. There are fears that such assertions are often made to provide an excuse for finding permanent homes. Under the proposals, councils would be sent guidance from the Government which would encourage them to use rented homes and hostels for the homeless.

Senior ministers will insist that the new arrangements should not be seen as an attack on single mothers and that councils would still have a duty to ensure they are properly housed.

However, Labour is certain to claim that the proposals will add to the difficulties of the homeless because they will know they can only stay in their properties for a given period before having to make new plans.

MARKS & SPENCER

PRODUCT RECALL

UPDATE

LADIES BLACK VELVET-LOOK SHOE CROSS-OVER FRONT

£17 (Before 19th Nov.)

£14 (From 19th Nov.)

Some of these shoes do not meet our safety specifications. The FAULTY shoes can be identified by the following code stamped on the sole:

—1119

A3120

IT HAS NOW BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT THESE SHOES HAVE BEEN ON DISPLAY SINCE SEPTEMBER 1993.

The shoes which are NOT FAULTY can be identified by the following code stamped on the sole:

1119

3120

Customers who have purchased the FAULTY shoes, OR WHO ARE UNABLE TO READ THE CODE STAMPED ON THE SOLE, are asked to return them to the Customer Service Desk of their local store for a refund.

NO OTHER ST. MICHAEL FOOTWEAR IS AFFECTED.

St Michael

Kitchen pin-up is an Old Master

By JOHN SHAW

AN OLD Master drawing found pinned to the back of a kitchen door in a Birmingham council house is likely to fetch up to £23,000 at auction in New York on January 12.

The owner is an elderly man who had no idea of the origin or value of the study, bought by his father more than 50 years ago. Sotheby's experts discovered that it is a 17th-century Italian baroque artist, and is a preparatory study for an important altar piece at a church in Rome. The potential importance of the study, 14in by 8in, was first identified by Richard Allen, a director of Halls Fine Art, Shrewsbury, who was called in to value it.

He said yesterday: "What alerted me first was the fact that the drawing was of fine quality and executed on old paper. It was mounted but not framed and on the bottom of the paper was the collection stamp which

proved its provenance." Despite being in a kitchen, he said it was in good condition.

The British Museum confirmed the stamp to be that of John Richardson Jr (1694-1771) a painter whose father, also an artist, had a celebrated collection of Old Master drawings.

Cristiana Romali, an Old Master drawing specialist at Sotheby's, said the work was similar to two others now in the Louvre but represented a further step in the final composition. It is executed in pen and brown ink and wash over black chalk and has an arched top.

The drawing was originally commissioned by the Marchese Orazio Spada and dedicated to the Virgin and St Carlo Borromeo and St Ignatius Loyola, the family's two patron saints. The finished altar piece is in the Spada Chapel in the Church of Santa Maria in Vallicella, Rome.



Maratta's drawing for a Rome altar piece

Doct bett hosp

By JERRY L. BAKER
AND ROGER THOMAS

THE "house system" for dealing with emergencies, in which all medical decisions are referred to a hospital doctor involved in a dispute that took 11 years to resolve. Many cases are abandoned before any agreement is reached, according to Dr. Christopher Neale. He believes that most companies should be sent within six months of Dr. Neale's appointment physician at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge. "The system is not a good one, but it is not a bad one either," he says. "It is a system that has been in place for a long time and it has worked well for a long time." His criticism comes as a government enquiry into the handling of medical complaints. The enquiry, set up by the Secretary of State for Health, will report next month. Dr. Neale, who advises lawyers handling medical negligence cases, says that the "house" system is a medical malpractice system.

Vanishing flight firm grounds travellers

By DOMINIC MANN

A TRAVEL company offering cheap flights has disappeared, grounding hundreds of Christmas and New Year holidaymakers. Premier Travel has abandoned its offices in the West End of London, leaving behind a few leased computers and some incomplete paperwork. The firm, which advertised in listings magazines, was particularly popular among expatriates living home for the holiday season. Among the stranded travellers was a man due to marry in Bali, and a Nigerian wedding party that included the guest bringing the rings. The company was not bonded, and tourists are unlikely to be refunded. Premier Travel was run by a Spaniard, Jose Lamea, a respected figure with 20 years in the industry. He is believed to have gone to Honduras with his Central American wife. The company asked customers to send cheques for flights and booked reservations with airlines without paying the full money. The customers realised something was wrong only 72 hours before the flight, when the promised tickets failed to arrive. Dr. Con Craig McKinnon has spoken to 60 victims who paid for flights to all parts of the world, including Britain seeking winter sunshine and letting them try to book a replacement flight before conducting full interviews in the new year. "It's almost impossible to get a flight at this time of year, so there have been a lot of tears," he said. "It illustrates the importance of using a company which is bonded."

MOBILE PH
£22
CASHBACK

SONY CHM 111
NORMAL PRICE £424
LESS £225 CASHBACK
NOW ONLY

£199

OR THE VERY LATEST
NOKIA 121 (NOT THE
OLD 101) (RRP £259)
NOW ONLY

£39

Mobile phone forward from any other
number and the delivery network
All prices based on
connection to business
line. Full phone billing
with £22.77 free rental
included. FINE £50
BONUS OF FREE CALLS

ODYSSEY

071 490 7000

40 Old Street,
London EC1V 9NH.

All major credit cards accepted

Doctor demands better deal for hospital victims

By JEREMY LAURANCE
AND ROGER DOBSON

THE "lousy system" for dealing with complaints of medical negligence must be reformed, says a hospital doctor involved in a dispute that took 11 years to resolve.

Many cases are abandoned before any agreement is reached, according to Dr Graham Neale. He believes that most complaints should be settled within six months.

Dr Neale, consultant physician at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, said: "The system is lousy. Once you get into these long periods, memories fade and you cannot get a lot from case notes."

His criticism comes as a government enquiry team prepares its recommendations on handling medical complaints. The enquiry, set up by Virginia Bottomley, Health Secretary, will report next month.

Dr Neale, who advises lawyers handling medical negligence cases, said: "In the UK, a medical-legal decision is

■ A proposal for no-fault settlement of medical negligence cases would give compensation in months rather than years

rarely reached within three years of the incident. The longest period I have been involved in was 11 years. Out of the 100 cases I looked at, only 25 were received within a year of the event and 24 were delayed by more than three years. In contrast, the Swedish complaint system — with no fault compensation (which does not require fault to be proved) — resolves cases within six months."

Dr Neale said that three out of four clinical faults he found might have been avoided by better care. "Studies have shown that only 10 per cent of cases where there is a medical error are in fact looked at."

Cases are often delayed because solicitors do not know where to turn for expert advice. Richard Dawson, who works for a firm of lawyers

specialising in medical negligence cases in Sale, Cheshire, said: "I am getting cases where up to five or six solicitors have already been involved. Medical claims are a specialised area. If you don't know the area, you can waste months, even years."

Pressure for some form of no-fault compensation along the lines of the Swedish system is growing. "With the British system, if you can prove fault you can get say £1 million compensation for a child. But another family whose child has the same kind of damage and who needs the same type of expensive care may get nothing because fault is not proved. In Scandinavia, the state looks after all damaged children — the money is spread more evenly," Dr Neale said.



It took Peter Bates ten years to reach a settlement in his son Christopher's case

Ignorant lawyers delay cash claims

By ROGER DOBSON

WHEN Matthew Nicholls died on August 23, 1985, his parents began legal action for medical negligence. Different lawyers advised the family to give up several times before the case was resolved nearly eight years later.

In another case, Stephen Withington believes he wasted a year, in which a solicitor failed to make any progress, until he tracked down one of the 70 law firms in the UK that specialises in medical negligence claims. It achieved a settlement of £1.5 million for his wife.

The time it takes medical negligence claims to reach settlement is frequently blamed on evasive action by hospitals or doctors, but there is increasing evidence that lawyers are also at fault.

Most patients seeking legal advice turn first to their own solicitor, who often has little or no experience of medical cases. Some families have gone through as many as six different firms, wasting years while all the time having to pay for the care of severely disabled people.

Matthew Nicholls, a teenager, died at Kidderminster General Hospital, Hereford

and Worcester, on August 23, 1985, his parents' wedding anniversary. Wendy and John Nicholls decided to take legal action over a family doctor's treatment.

After four firms of solicitors and almost five years, they found success with a leading specialist firm in Greater Manchester.

When Mr Withington's wife was crippled while giving birth, he went to a firm of lawyers who had handled conveyancing for him — "they were the only solicitors I really knew". He said that eventually he was told that the firm were not specialists and was advised to move.

Peter Bates began legal action against Gwent Health Authority ten years ago when his son Christopher was left paralysed from the neck down and partially sighted after his birth at Nevill Hall Hospital, Abergavenny. Mr Bates, a retired teacher, said: "I went to the solicitor who had dealt with my house purchase." He too finally changed his solicitor, "but I believe we lost between two and three years".

The Bates case ended after ten years with an out-of-court settlement of £600,000.

Vanishing flight firm grounds travellers

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

A TRAVEL company offering cheap flights has disappeared, grounding hundreds of Christmas and New Year holidaymakers.

Premier Travel has abandoned its offices in the West End of London, leaving behind a few leased computers and some incomplete paperwork. The firm, which advertised in listings magazines, was particularly popular among expatriates flying home for the holiday season.

Among the stranded travellers was a man due to marry in Bali, and a Nigerian wedding party that included the guest bringing the rings. The company was not bonded, so tourists are unlikely to be refunded.

Premier Travel was run by a Spaniard, José Lamela, a respected figure with 20 years in the industry. He is believed to have gone to Honduras with his Central American wife.

The company asked customers to send cheques for flights, and booked reservations with airlines without paying the full money. The customers realised something was wrong only 72 hours before the flight, when the promised tickets failed to arrive.

Det Con Craig McKinlay has spoken to 60 victims who paid for flights to all parts of the world, including Britons seeking winter sunshine and European city breaks. He is letting them try to book a replacement flight before conducting full interviews in the new year.

"It's almost impossible to get a flight at this time of year, so there have been a lot of tears," he said. "It illustrates the importance of using a company which is bonded."

Mystery of King Tut's queen may be solved

By NORMAN HAMMOND
ARCHAEOLOGY
CORRESPONDENT

THE mummy of Tutankhamun's queen may be lying unrecognized in the Egyptian Valley of the Kings. The "Elder Lady", found nearly a century ago in the tomb of another pharaoh, Amenhotep II, has hair identical with a lock found in the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922.

The "Elder Lady's" mummy had previously been tentatively identified by James Harris and Kent Weeks in *X-raying the Pharaohs* as Queen Hatshepsut, the only known female pharaoh, but when the hair was analysed the identity shifted to Queen Tiye, consort of Amenhotep III, who lived two generations before Tutankhamun.

Dr Susan James writes in the Egyptological journal *KMT* that the age of the woman at death was too young to have been either of these women. The burial posture "suggests a status in life greater than Great Royal Wife". She adds: "The flexed arm and clenched hand with upraised thumb may indicate that she once held symbols of a queen regnant."

Tutankhamun's queen was Ankhesenamen, who would have been about 15 when she was married to the nine-year-old pharaoh, her half-brother. After his death, Dr James suggests, she may have married his successor Ay, and died in her early thirties.

Dr John Taylor, of the British Museum's Department of Egyptian Antiquities, said the theory was interesting but could not be proved. "There is no evidence that the position of the arms indicates royal status."

[AN URGENT APPEAL FROM THE CITIZENS AND SURVIVORS OF HIROSHIMA]

PLEASE SAY NO TO

THORP

FOR NEARLY 50 YEARS SINCE THE fateful day Hiroshima was struck by an atom bomb, our loved ones have suffered from the lingering effects of the deadly nuclear radiation that assaulted our city.



SATOMI OBA, Director, Plutonium Action Hiroshima. "No more nuclear weapons materials should be created. This is the fervent hope of the tens of thousands of people who suffered at Hiroshima."



FUMITAKE NAKAMURA, Second generation hibakusha. "Operating THORP would trample on the wishes of West Cumbria and Hiroshima people."

MANY OF US spend our lives in hospitals. Others suffer quietly at home. Leukemia, cancer, other diseases and constant fatigue are frequent. So many lives have been ruined by the continuing effects of radiation. What happened to us must never happen again.

AS THE WITNESSES TO Hiroshima, we feel an unbearable sadness knowing that Japan's electric utilities have shipped over 3,400 tonnes of radioactive waste to your country

from our nuclear plants. They say it is for "reprocessing". But we say it is criminal for our country to dump our nuclear waste in yours, exposing your citizens to the deadly risks of radiation.

DESPITE STRONG PUBLIC OPPOSITION, JAPAN has begun construction of its own reprocessing plant at Rokkasho Mura. Our plant will cost more than THORP, which is built to cheaper,

more hazardous standards. Japanese utilities are eager to reap the savings from THORP's lower cost. But it is the people of West Cumbria and others downwind who will pay the price.

RELIABLE REPORTS FROM THE U.K. INDICATE a far greater incidence of leukemia among the children of parents who worked at Sellafield. What good are the jobs and income promised by THORP if it also contaminates the workers and makes their children sick? We cannot bear the thought that our country may be responsible for such suffering by the citizens of your country.

BUT THE EFFECTS OF THORP WILL NOT BE confined to the U.K. The reprocessing of Japanese

find responsible alternatives to THORP. Let us work together against the proliferation of plutonium and nuclear weapons.

THORP IS NOT THE ANSWER. THORP will be Japan's shame, and a most dangerous and costly mistake for the U.K. Both the citizens of the Rokkasho Mura area and West Cumbria deserve better — better economic security and a safe and healthy environment to raise their children.

Let us work together to that end.

nuclear waste at Sellafield will result in sufficient plutonium to make more than 2,000 nuclear weapons. At the very moment in history when nuclear disarmament appears within grasp, Japan's pursuit of plutonium-based nuclear technology threatens to revive the global arms race.

AS THE CITIZENS OF HIROSHIMA, we can no longer stand silently by, watching our government as it obstinately pushes your country, our country, and the world, to the edge of another nuclear precipice. We declare our strong support for all U.K. citizens opposed to THORP. Let us urge both our countries to



SUZUKO NUMATA, Hibakusha. Age 21 when bombed 1 km. from epicentre. "Each individual's 'peace movement' has the power to finally lead to a monumental tree of peace."



MAMORU NISHIMOTO, Second generation hibakusha. "The lessons of Hiroshima have not been learned if THORP operates."

MOBILE PHONE
£225
CASHBACK

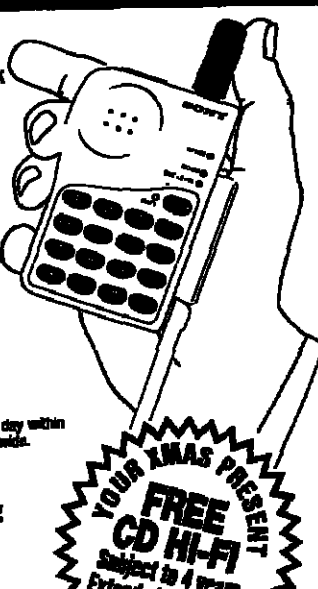
SONY CMH 111
NORMAL PRICE £424,
LESS £225 CASHBACK
NOW ONLY

£199

OR THE VERY LATEST
NOKIA 121 (NOT THE
OLD 101) (RRP £299)
NOW ONLY

£39

Mobile phone delivered same day within
UK, next day delivery nationwide.
All prices based on
connection to business
tariff. Half minute billing
with £12.77 free rental
available. Plus £50
worth of FREE CALLS!



ODYSSEY
071 490 7000
10 Old Street,
London EC1Y 9NH.

081 740 7000
15 Old Oak Common Lane
London W3.

All major credit cards accepted

YODAFONE

*Hiroshima atom bomb survivor

TAMOTSU AKINA, Member, House of Representatives,
Hiroshima, Japanese Diet
AKIRA INADA, Hibakusha, Member, Hiroshima Prefecture Legislature

Rt. Hon. John Major, MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA

Please join the survivors of Hiroshima in opposing THORP. If it operates, THORP would seriously contaminate the U.K. and European air and water. Negotiate with the Japanese government for a better alternative. What happened to the people of Hiroshima must never happen again. Please act now.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

Mr. Morihiro Hosokawa
Prime Minister of Japan
c/o Embassy of Japan, 101 Piccadilly, London W1Y 9PH

Please listen to the citizens and survivors of Hiroshima and stop Japan's reckless pursuit of plutonium-based nuclear power. Japan should be leading global efforts against nuclear proliferation instead of spending its nuclear waste over the U.K. and Europe. Negotiate with the U.K. government for a better alternative to THORP.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

SADAKO KIRIHARA, Hibakusha, poet
ICHIRO MORTAISI, Hibakusha, President, Japan Congress Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs; Chairperson, Hiroshima Congress Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs
SUZUKO NUMATA, Hibakusha, Founding Member, Hiroshima Hibakusha For Youth

President Bill Clinton
The White House, Washington, DC 20500 U.S.A.

Please join the survivors of Hiroshima in opposing THORP, the nuclear reprocessing plant in the U.K., and Japan's misguided pursuit of plutonium-based nuclear power. Please urge the leaders of Japan and the U.K. to stop the proliferation of deadly plutonium and the renewed threat of nuclear terror. What happened to the people of Hiroshima must never happen again. Please act now.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

SATOMI OBA, Director, Plutonium Action Hiroshima
YUKIO YOKOHARA, Secretary General, Hiroshima Congress Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs
MAKOTO YOSHINO, Painter

Hiroshima Citizens and Survivors
Opposed to Plutonium
2363-3 Akayama, Shiraki-cho, Asakita-ku
Hiroshima 739-14, Japan

We agree with you wholeheartedly. Japanese utilities should not be allowed to spend their nuclear waste over West Cumbria and Europe. THORP should not be allowed to operate. The Japanese and the U.K. should negotiate a better alternative, and the U.S. should urge them to do so. Please print clearly.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

Economy crippled as sanctions bite and inflation rockets above 100,000 per cent

Nationalist agenda gives Serb voters little to choose from

FROM TIM JUDAH IN BELGRADE

EXACTLY a year ago voters pouring out of the polling station in Belgrade's industrial suburb of Rakovica gave a strong indication of which way the electoral wind was blowing. Most were casting their ballots for the extreme nationalist Radical Party of Vojislav Seselj. If straw polls conducted yesterday are anything to go by, Serbia's electorate has since splintered and no party will take a commanding lead.

Mr Seselj's break with President Milosevic plunged the country into political crisis. That could worsen this morning if no party looks strong enough to form a stable government. The election comes on the eve of new Bosnian partition talks in Geneva.

Veselin Veselinovic, a suitably dressed militiaman who normally fights in Croatia, said that he had voted for Mr Seselj because his own party, which he described as the "Serbian Fascists", was not fielding candidates. Osman, a Bosnian Muslim who lives in Rakovica, refused to disclose who he was voting for, but made a stout defence of President Milosevic, saying that Serbia "is not guilty because it is not at war".

An old man said that his

pension bought only 2lb of carrots. Sanctions and war have crippled Serbia's economy. Inflation may rise above 100,000 per cent this month and new banknotes appear almost every week. The last was a 50 billion dinars note; it came only days after the 5 billion note was issued.

The mint works overtime producing billions of unbacked dinars. Some economists say that only by bringing it under control and slashing public expenditure can Serbia's finances be managed again. "No one can go on for years like this," Jurij Bajec, an economist, said. "No one has done this before."

Only one trend was discernible in Rakovica. That was emerging support for the hitherto marginal Democratic Party. "Honesty," purrs Zoran Djindjic, the party leader, on his television advertisements. Mr Djindjic may turn out to be the joker in the electoral pack because if he makes enough gains he is likely to be courted by both the opposition and the Socialists in an attempt to form a coalition government.

The election has been dominated by a nationalist agenda which, unlike a year ago, has meant that there is little to

choose from between the Socialists and the main opposition parties. The greatest impact has been made by Zeljko Raznjajovic, better known as Arkan, who led the most ruthless of the paramilitaries in Bosnia.

His supporters have plastered Belgrade with his posters. Television and radio have constantly been playing his catchy party theme tune. The level of the electoral debate was best encapsulated in a television debate on Thursday night. A Socialist candidate made as little impact as Vuk Draskovic, the opposition nationalist leader, whose most enthusiastic supporters are local British diplomats. But the debate took off when Arkan crossed swords with Mr Seselj. Both are high on international lists of alleged war criminals. Arkan claimed Mr Seselj's paramilitaries had failed to liberate an inch of Serbian land in Bosnia and Croatia.

In fact, Arkan claimed Mr Seselj had spent the war guzzling roast lamb and managed only to put on 22 kilos in weight. Mr Seselj hit back. He said that Arkan's plundering made only one thing fat — his bank balance, by 22 million German marks.



Vuk Draskovic, the opposition nationalist leader, and his wife, Danica, casting their ballots at a polling booth in Belgrade yesterday. His most enthusiastic supporters seem to be among local British diplomats.

Migrant gets parcel bomb in Germany

FROM REUTERS IN MIELE

GERMAN police blamed racist attackers yesterday for a parcel bomb that blew off the hand of an ethnic Albanian man and injured three members of his family.

A spokeswoman said the family, originally from Kosovo in Yugoslavia, had been living in the west German town of Miele for 22 years and was fully integrated into the community.

The man, 32, lost a hand when the bomb, contained in a radio sent to the family's home, exploded. The man's other hand was mutilated. His niece, 11, was injured and a seven-year-old boy slightly hurt after the man switched on the radio and it exploded. His wife, 32, was slightly injured and a two-year-old child was treated for shock.

"We have found no clues as to who sent the bomb, but have to assume that the motive was racist," a police spokeswoman said. She could give no details on the construction of the bomb. "It is certainly a complicated device."

German anti-racists and security officials have been concerned that a wave of letter bomb attacks in Austria last week could spill over the border to Germany. The Austrian bombing campaign was directed at prominent people linked to refugees and foreigners and was believed to have been the work of neo-Nazi groups.

Yeltsin ponders far-right pact

FROM ANNE MCELVOY IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S radical reformers, still reeling from their poor performance in the country's first parliamentary elections a week ago, launched an "anti-Fascist front" at the weekend in the hope of limiting the influence of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the extreme right-wing leader. There are rumours that President Yeltsin may include nationalists in his government or in key security positions in order to pacify Mr Zhirinovskiy.

An appeal signed by Yegor Gaidar, the Economics Minister and leader of the main democratic bloc, Russia's Choice, and Anatoli Chubais, the Privatisation Minister, together with Yuri Cherednichenko, the head of the Agrarian Party, and democratic leaders, calls for a ban on "serious changes in the presidential apparatus, television, security and law enforcement bodies" reflected fears that the Kremlin may be searching for common ground with the Liberal Democrats.

The appeal also demands a ban on "Fascist propaganda" and adds: "The President of a democratic country cannot grant equal chances for democrats and Nazis."

But the government is split on the reasons for Mr Zhirinovskiy's success and how to react. Younger democrats who launched the "anti-Fascist front" believe that there is a real threat to Russia from the far right and are

evoking memories of Nazism to encourage people to fight it. However, Viktor Chernomyrdin, the moderate Prime Minister, has blamed hasty economic reforms for Mr Zhirinovskiy's rise and said that it is a protest vote best responded to with a change in policy.

In his sharpest yet attack on his government colleagues, Mr Chernomyrdin told *Trud* newspaper: "We should face the truth and admit that many people voted against the hardships and mistakes of the current reforms... I said it a year and a half ago and I am ready to repeat it now: it was wrong to jump in the river without testing the water first."

Andrei Kozyrev, the Foreign Minister, called on Klaus Kinkel, his German counterpart on a visit to Moscow, to keep supporting Russian reforms, fearing his country faced international isolation after the neo-Fascist victory.

The four reformist parties are likely to become the biggest bloc in the state Duma, with 108 of the 450 seats. But the nationalists and Communists are set to control more than 140, so pro-reform decisions cannot be expected from the legislature. Mr Yeltsin has the choice of moving away from the austerity programme, or pushing through tough reforms by decree.

William Rees-Mogg, page 14

Gore backs faster aid for Russia

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

AL GORE, the American Vice-President, alarmed by the reformists' poor showing in the Russian elections, flew home from Moscow at the weekend calling for accelerated international economic aid to Russia.

In a stopover to meet Helmut Kohl in Germany and in press briefings, Mr Gore and his aides said the International Monetary Fund should ease the stringent economic conditions that it insists Moscow must meet to qualify for big new loans.

Mr Clinton expressed similar sentiments in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* last week, suggesting that hardships caused by the international community's insistence on rapid and radical economic reform fuelled the popular anger which the nationalist and Communist candidates exploited. Last April the G7 group of leading industrial nations approved an additional \$28 billion (£19 billion) in aid, but little has been disbursed because Russia has yet to meet the IMF's conditions.

Mr Gore said the international community had been "slow to recognise hardships caused by its demands for rapid economic reform". A senior official in Mr Gore's party added that the rules had to be "calibrated more to the sensitivity and judgment of the Russians".

French losing cultural battle of name-calling

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN PARIS

FRANCE may have won the battle to keep its quotas on culture but the guardians of the Gallic soul might have done well to include Christian names. When it comes to naming French children, the Anglo-Saxons are making huge inroads as proved by news that Kevin has emerged as the most popular boy's name of 1993, followed within the first ten by Anthony and Jeremy.

And what names are fashion-sharp French parents being advised to bestow on their offspring in 1994? Banish any thought of Jean-Pierre or Monique and think Brian, Allan, Alison or Cindy. The suggestions come from Philippe Besnard, a government sociologist who has just published a rigorously-argued guide to popular names for 1994. Next year, such current favourites as Jimmy, Teddy and Steve will be turning *démodé*, he says.

The trend towards Anglo-American names is especially sharp among the French



Costner: films did not influence the French

new number two and number three names among the workers, would have gone down as Antoine and Jérémie.

Kevin, M Besnard says, owes its popularity to American television. "Kevin Costner had nothing to do with the launch of Kevin," he says. The name took off in the late 1980s when the actor was relatively unknown in France.

While the Anglo-Saxon craze is biased to the television-watching classes, the bourgeoisie follows different fashions. At the moment, the better-off favour Thomas, Paul and Louis, Charlotte, Marie and Camille.

But fashion has yet to affect the name league of living French. The top names remain, as they have for years, Marie, Monique and Françoise, and Michel, Jean and Pierre.

France can be satisfied, M Besnard says, that some unfashionable French girl's names are popular in the Anglo-Saxon world, notably Nicole, Michelle and Claire.

Leading article, page 15

EPSON Stylus INKJETS

Too good to cost so little.

Whatever you need in an inkjet printer, it's all here. Take the Epson Stylus 800. We believe it's the best-value personal inkjet in its class. Crisp, laser-quality output. Perfect letters, graphics and overheads. Sharp, clear characters — at up to 3 pages per minute. An Epson piezo print head for precise control of the ink on almost any paper. Low running costs — just 1.5p a page. Built-in 100-sheet A4 feeder. Desktop size. And it runs with all major software.

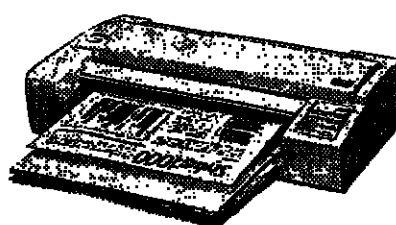
What more could you want?

How about the new Epson Stylus 300? A robust, low-cost alternative to the Stylus 800 — for personal or home use.

Or the wide-carriage Epson Stylus 1000? With the same advanced print head technology and A3 paper feed.

The Epson Stylus Inkjets. Rugged, reliable, good value, great quality. All with a 2-year warranty. What else would you expect from Epson?

For a free information pack dial 100 and ask for Freephone Inkjet or return the coupon.



EPSON Stylus 1000
Ask your dealer for best prices (RRP £579 Ex.VAT)



EPSON Stylus 800
Around £250 Ex.VAT
Average retail price (RRP £239 Ex.VAT)



EPSON Stylus 300
Around £230 Ex.VAT
Average retail price (RRP £229 Ex.VAT)

Please send my information pack including brochure, press reviews, free gift and The Inkjet Guide ☐

Name Title Company

Address

Postcode Telephone

Return to: Epson UK Limited, FREEPOST, Campus 100, Maylands Avenue, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP2 8BR (No stamp required) T-2012-R

CALL FREE! DIAL 100 AND ASK FOR FREEPHONE INKJET.



The World Printer Specialist Inkjet Printers • Dot Matrix Printers • Laser Printers

A DIVISION OF SEIKO EPSON CORPORATION
Epson® is a registered trade mark and Epson Stylus™ is a trade mark of Seiko Epson Corporation.
Seiko Epson Corporation, 3-5, Owa 3 Chome, Suwa-shi, Nagano-ken, 392 Japan.

EPSON®

Bridge to Palestinians' promised land stays blocked



Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli Prime Minister, led the British force into Jerusalem

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN CAIRO

AT THE heart of yesterday's Israeli-PLO talks in Norway was a dispute over future control of two inauspicious-looking border crossings, one across the Allenby Bridge from Jordan into the West Bank and the other at the divided desert town of Rafah from Egypt into the Gaza Strip.

A humble border crossing has become a symbol of discord. Whoever controls it, both sides believe, controls access to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa

spot where for most of the year it is little more than a trickle of muddy brown water and a disappointment to Christian pilgrims who make the journey annually.

regarded by Israel as too valuable a security prize to give up completely in the present insecure climate when opponents of peace have vowed to step up violence against Israel.

Behind the PLO's insistence on securing control of the bridge and the border station at Rafah leading into the squalid Gaza Strip is its need to convince Palestinians it has secured at least one visible symbol of future statehood from its deal over limited autonomy in Jericho and Gaza.

Similar concerns affect the other border point at Rafah, a divided town with about 4,000 Palestinian refugees stranded on the Egyptian side and often divided from their families. The PLO compromise being suggested yesterday involved the shared control of borders with international forces. Certain elements in the PLO were also prepared to permit electronic surveillance of the border points by the Israeli authorities.

Yassir Arafat, the PLO leader, conscious of the importance of symbols in his attempt to sell the peace accord to the five million Palestinians, has announced that he would never cross the Allenby Bridge to take up residence if it was to remain under Israeli jurisdiction.

Israel and PLO fail to break deadlock in new Oslo talks

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI and Palestinian negotiators apparently failed to resolve yesterday the outstanding problems that have deadlocked their peace agreement, in spite of two rounds of emergency talks in Oslo, the site of the historic breakthrough earlier this year.

Shimon Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister, and his team of diplomatic and military officials were reportedly planning a third day of talks today, after key security and territorial disputes with Yassir Arafat, the PLO chairman, scheduled for Cairo on Thursday.

However, Israeli military officials said yesterday that some of the 197 Palestinians allowed to return last week from banishment in southern Lebanon were being released from Israeli detention camps and returning to their homes. Israel's army radio put the number released at 120.

ing points from the West Bank into Jordan and from Gaza into Egypt. The two sides are also in dispute over the size of the Palestinian-controlled area in Jericho and the scope of Israeli security arrangements for Jewish settlers.

Ministers attending the weekly Cabinet meeting said yesterday that there was unanimous support for Mr Rabin's insistence that Israeli security forces keep control of the frontiers, although Palestinians would be allowed to maintain a presence at the border. Benjamin Ben-Eliezer,

Washington: The Clinton Administration is seeking to impose tough new conditions for lifting the UN ban on Iraqi oil exports, according to *The New York Times*. Britain, France and Russia had apparently agreed, but China's position, the fifth permanent Security Council member, was unknown.

the Housing Minister, said that relinquishing the borders would jeopardise Israeli security, and grant Palestinians de facto sovereignty. "I realise now that the PLO, mainly Yassir Arafat, is talking about establishing a Palestinian state and we are talking about a transitional period and autonomy," he said. "These are the two different scenarios."

For its part, the PLO's executive committee decided in a meeting on Friday night in Tunis that it was not prepared to retreat from any of its demands. "What is the

meaning of Israeli control of passages when these are for access to a Palestinian zone from which the Israelis have withdrawn," said Suleiman Najah, a committee member.

Over the weekend militants in both communities continued to make their presence felt. Yesterday the Israeli authorities were considering taking legal action against a leading rabbi after he told soldiers not to obey their commanders if ordered to remove Jewish settlers from the occupied territories.

Rabbi Shlomo Goren, the former chief military chaplain, said that Jewish law took precedence over all others, even the state of Israel. He insisted that removing Jews from their God-given land was tantamount to "a rebellion against Moses, against the Torah, and against Judaism".

In the Gaza Strip, six Palestinians were injured yesterday during a second day of clashes in the Rafah refugee camp between activists from the PLO's mainstream Fatah faction loyal to Mr Arafat and the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Clair-raided Israeli fighter bombers yesterday launched two air raids in southern Lebanon against suspected positions of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah organisation. The attack, aimed at the Iklim al-Toufah mountain ridge east of the port city of Sidon, followed heavy exchanges of artillery over the weekend.

Leading article, page 15
Letters, page 15



A Palestinian Islamic Jihad supporter walking on Israeli and US flags at a rally in the Rafah camp in Gaza. Yesterday Israeli and PLO negotiators met in Oslo

Lockerbie evidence points to Damascus

BY MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

AS BRITAIN and the United States step up pressure in the United Nations for tougher sanctions against Libya, evidence has emerged suggesting that Syria may also have played a role in the bombing of the Pan Am aircraft over Lockerbie.

The head of the Swiss firm that supplied the electronic timers of the type used in the bombing now says that two of the timers were sent to the East German army and could have found their way to Syria.

Edwin Bollier, in a BBC interview to be broadcast tomorrow to mark the fifth anniversary of the bombing, at first told the Lockerbie investigators that the prototypes of the timers had been supplied only to Libya. He now tells the BBC that he remembered taking two of them to the East German army in 1985.

There are thought to have been close links between the East German Stasi secret police and a Palestinian guerrilla group, PFLP-General Command, based in Syria. German police are said to have confirmed Mr Bollier's visit to Berlin.

Syria was initially suspected of a link with the bombing, but subsequently all official evidence pointed only to Libya. There have been accusations that the West has not pursued evidence linking Lockerbie to Syria because it helped secure the release of Western hostages in Beirut.

A Foreign Office spokesman said yesterday there was no change in the view that the men wanted for the bombing were in Libya. "Any new evidence should be presented to the investigators," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

50 feared dead after Colombia mud slide

Bogotá: Colombian rescue workers have recovered 34 bodies and at least 13 people are missing feared dead after a mudslide swept through a farming town 62 miles north-west of Medellín. "It's one of the worst disasters in the region this year," a Red Cross official said.

A rain-swollen stream swept mud through Dabeiba on Friday evening injuring 36 people and demolishing 25 houses, including a retirement home. About 200 people were left homeless.

Survivors looked at the remains of their brick homes and saw only rocks, tree limbs and mud, local television reported. (Reuters)

Zardari cleared

Karachi: A Pakistani court acquitted Asif Ali Zardari, husband of Benazir Bhutto, the Prime Minister, of kidnapping a businessman and demanding a £220,000 ransom. He still faces charges of illegal arms possession and fixing bank loans. (Reuters)

Tapie hearing

Paris: French magistrates have summoned Bernard Tapie, the former Minister of Urban Affairs, for a hearing on Wednesday over alleged business fraud. It was reported that his parliamentary immunity from prosecution was lifted this month. (Reuters)

Escobar attack

Bogotá: Roberto Escobar, the elder brother of Pablo, the late cocaine baron, had eye surgery in Medellín after suffering multiple injuries from a letter bomb in his prison cell. The explosion put his life in danger, a hospital spokeswoman said. (Reuters)

Poll violence

Conakry: Three people, including a soldier, were killed and ten wounded as gangs of youths with knives and clubs roamed the capital torching polling booths and disrupting voting in Guinea's multi-party presidential election. (AFP)

Leader resigns

Moscow: Abdumalik Abdula-zhanov, Tajikistan's Prime Minister, under pressure over the republic's economic problems, has resigned. Tass cited "reliable sources" as saying he had been made acting ambassador to Russia. (Reuters)

Hanging prank

Saarbrücken: A German schoolboy aged 12 was nearly strangled when pupils attempted to hang him as a prank. He dangled at the end of a noose for some time before being rescued by other pupils. Police issued an arrest warrant for a 15-year-old. (Reuters)

Clinton keeps smiling on Yule treadmill

FROM IAN BRODIE AND MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

HILLARY and Chelsea Clinton will have to feign surprise when they open their presents from Billion Christmas Day. At the weekend the President made his second attempt at a private shopping trip and again he failed.

Every American newspaper reported that he bought a scarf, a shawl, a statuette and a necklace in New York last week. At Washington's Union Station on Saturday, he bought a black velvet hat, tea bags, two picture frames, a lollipop, shortbread and a necklace of amber, lapis lazuli, red coral and silver.

Christmas is altogether a tough time for the President. Affairs of state remain as pressing as ever, but for the past two weeks Mr Clinton has had to devote hours of

every day hosting an endless succession of White House Christmas parties — sometimes two a night — for hundreds of guests at a time.

These can hardly be fun for the President and the First Lady. They get little chance to mingle. Instead they endure hour after hour of what White House insiders call "shake, swirl and smile" — the ritual of being photographed with every guest.

Guests approach the Clintons two at a time, shake hands, turn and force a nervous smile for the camera before being beckoned away by an aide, even while the President is still muttering "Merry Christmas". Total elapsed time: 15 seconds at the most.

Last Wednesday this chore began within minutes of Mr

Clinton announcing Les Aspin's resignation as Defence Secretary. Small wonder that he seemed preoccupied, though still managing to be gracious. He could have been forgiven for ducking the



Chelsea: must feign surprise over gifts

dreary duty that enables congressmen, journalists, judges and entire layers of government bureaucrats to boast of egg-nog at the White House and show off photographs of themselves with the Clintons to friends and relatives.

The Clintons expect a horde of guests for Christmas dinner — mothers, brothers, other family members and friends. Their neighbour and friend from Arkansas, Carolyn Staley, will arrive with Mr Clinton's seasonal props, including antlers, Rudolph noses and Santa Claus suit.

It is a family custom to act out "The 12 Days of Christmas". Mr Clinton claims to be a great partridge in a pear tree, but informed sources say his rendition of lords a-leaping is even better. For that day at least, Mr Clinton

may be able to forget the endless problems of his job which were compounded over the weekend.

Illustrating the difficulty he has had persuading top people to join his Administration, Mr Clinton's old friend, Harold Ickes, a New York lawyer, turned down an offer to head the Administration's health care campaign, citing personal reasons. Also smouldering is the question of Mr Clinton's past dealings with James McDougal, a bankrupt Arkansas building society owner who lent him campaign money.

□ Aspin post: The White House said the "door is open" to Mr Aspin to become ambassador to China after his resignation as Defence Secretary becomes effective next month. (Reuters)

Boastful Bobbit tells of surgical success

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE former US Marine whose penis was cut off by his wife with a kitchen knife, has claimed that the severed organ became longer when it was reattached.

Mr Wayne Bobbitt, whose wife goes on trial next month on charges of malicious wounding, said in a television interview he was confident of regaining full use of the reattached member. "I think it's going to be a lot better than it was," he said. "I say it's a little longer than it was."

The one-time bouncer, who was acquitted of repeatedly forcing his wife to have sex, admitted, however, that he was not able to have sex at the moment. "I tried with an old girlfriend 1 date... and that didn't work." He predicted that it would take a couple of

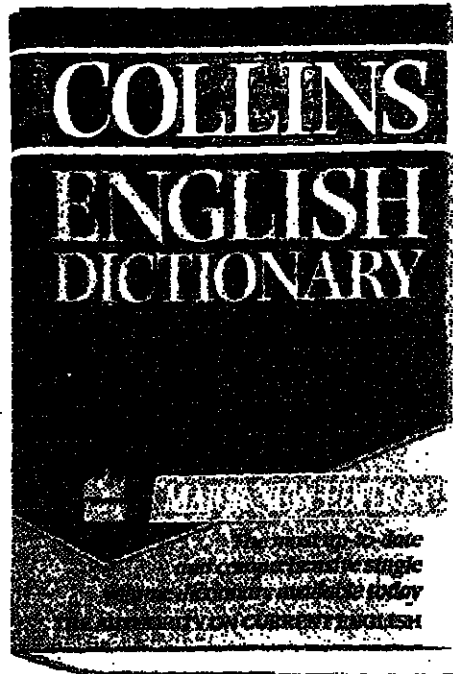
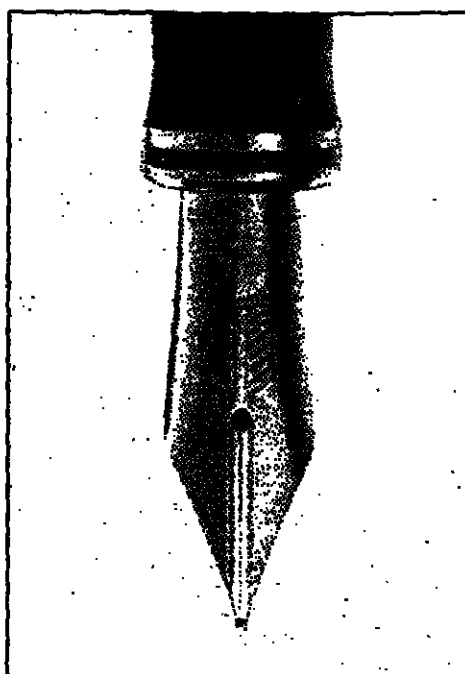
years before he could become sexually active again.

Dr James Schn, the urologist who helped sew Mr Bobbitt's penis back in nine hours of surgery, cast some doubt on his patient's claim that the organ had grown. He said that the tingling sensations triggered by the regeneration of nerves might have caused him to feel a change in size.

Mr Bobbitt also said that he had recently been kicked in the groin by an angry bull, but did not say what effect this had had on him.

He insisted that his wife, Lorena, should go to jail, saying that the court should make an example of her. Reflecting on the lessons he had learnt, he said that next time "I'll be careful who I pick for my girlfriends".

The Weapon



The Ammunition

Arm yourself for a changing world with the Collins English Dictionary. A reliable and up-to-date arsenal, it contains over 180,000 references, including 16,000 entries for people and places. And, happily, you can procure the most up-to-date dictionary of its kind for just £19.99.

The Authority on Current English.

Happily plastered one moment, then horribly lucid the next... such a dangerous turn of events could quite ruin your social life

Get-sober-quick? No thanksh

I am the Ghost of Christmas Drunk. Stagger with me down the arches of the years; pause by an alehouse door to read a 17th-century pamphlet on tavern terms. "Never call a Good-Fellow a Drunkard, but without forfeit say 'He is Fox, He is Flaw'd, he is Fluster'd. He is Stupe, Cupshot, Cut in the Leg, He hath seen the French King, He hath whipt the Cat, he hat bit his Grammam, or is it by a Barn Weasel?'"

Reel unsteadily onward through history and across geography, and let me demonstrate (via Mr Jonathon Green's fine *Slang Down the Ages*) the great and consistent tradition of humanity getting itself drunk as a bat, a besom, a boiled owl or a fiddler's bitch; also a wheelbarrow, a newt, a rat, a prune, a king; wonder how many human souls have been Brahms and Liszt, had a touch of the sun, been lit up like Broadway,

loaded to the Plimsoll Mark, flying blind, lame and legless, stingo, swacko, stonkered, stocious, tired-and-emotional, bevved, and half-seas under. Consider, I ask you, with suitable awe, the long history of the blind, the bender and the piss-up.

For I am here to warn you that this could be the last festive season in which it is safe to become comfortably whistled in company. Unpurse those lips: I swear to you that behind the wheel, pregnant or in charge of a baby's bathtime I belong most primly to the zero-unit generation (not worth starting something you can't finish, I say). It is just that sometimes — surrounded by the ghosts of

cupshot, barn-weaselled, flaw'd and flustered ancestors — I like to let the units pile up a bit. Call it catharsis. And scientists have no business interfering.

Their latest truly frightening invention is a compound called either Detoxahol or SoberGain, depending on who eventually gets licensed to wrap it up. Unlike all previous solutions it is actually rumoured to work. Hitherto we have been stuck with black coffee, cold water and fresh air, which create respectively a wideawake drunk, a chilly drunk or a drunk who has fallen into the fishpond. Now we are to have chemicals which clear the "toxins" from the blood so fast that, "within min-



LIBBY PURVES

utes", the averagely tipsy can be rendered stone cold sober.

They are pitching it at drivers, although so far no policeman or doctor seems too convinced. But never mind drivers: what about the rest of us? Can you imagine

any social situation more humiliating and uncomradely than one in which a protagonist suddenly ceases to be well-away and roaring, and becomes utterly sober? Try two scenarios. First, imagine yourself as the one still drunk. There you are, leaning affectionately on the detoxified one's shoulder and only half-way through your emotional account of how you always longed to be a nun, or what a bastard your boss is, or What Shakespeare Really Meant. Just as you get to the bit where you break into plain song, or admit that your line manager is mainly harassing you by having such disturbing chest hair, you sense a sudden falling-off of sympathy. Your com-

panion, who has taken an unobtrusive pill, is no longer saying "Ghashly for you... just sh shame thing happened to me...". He or she has, moreover, stopped patting your arm and is glancing at the clock, instead, and muttering about early starts. Where does this leave you? Bereft, that's where. At least if you get drunk alongside a non-drinker you have time to adjust to one another's odd ways. But to find yourself baring your innermost soul to a buddy who suddenly becomes a brisk, emotionless Vulcan would be appalling. Even worse than the fate of politicians who encounter certain famously demonic journalists: men who have freak, total, recall of

drunken conversations or even more dishonourably those who actually feign drunkenness in order to elicit national secrets from fearful undersecretaries.

Now try the second scene, in which you are in jovial and brilliant company, sparkling away in a mirrored saloon, and someone talks you into downing a dose. From being the epitome of witty desirability you suddenly, at that evil mirror, become a dishvelled slut with your lipstick on sideways; or a sweating slob with a red nose and skewed tie. All around you the brilliant company dissolves into pathetic, scarlet-faced lurching idiots. The shock, the shame could almost kill you. Normally he gets a whole night of oblivion in which the subconscious can work out excuses, before the morning when some sober, prim friend says those ominous words "Gosh, you were on good form last night".

The wisdom of the font

Godparents, says Nicholas Coleridge, have the best of all worlds — provided they can afford it

Anyone who has attempted to organise a christening, or even become a godparent, in the last couple of years will have noticed an odd and contradictory state of affairs. The Church of England has never been less accommodating over the arrangements. To secure a private christening, as opposed to a public morning service, now requires special pleading or coercion, and even then is usually refused. To inveigle a vicar into christening your baby at all involves months of dutiful Sunday worship.

And yet, as never before, the role of godparent, and the sheer number of them jostling around the font, has grown and grown. Until the Fifties, it was novel for any baby to be allocated more than three: "two of the same sex as the child, one of the opposite sex", as section B23 of the Church Canons puts it. Thereafter, the customary number rose to four — two godfathers, two godmothers. Lately this has expanded to six, often seven. At the christening of one of my latest god-daughters there were eight of us, including Joan Collins in a wide-brimmed hat, craning our necks for a glimpse of the action. I have heard of a recent English country christening featuring nine godparents, and another, in New England, ten. Among a certain species of modern parent it is becoming as important to sign up a large and judiciously chosen roster

of godparents as for the chairmen of certain companies to field a board of heavy-hitting non-executive directors.

Since so many of us marry later, we accumulate more friends. When it comes to choosing godparents, this is awkward. Few people any longer have a single "best friend"; instead we are enmeshed in a complex web of overlapping friendships. Both husband and wife may have a dozen friends each of whom they have known well for as many years. It is tricky to select only three or four front-runners from this huge cast of characters, so numbers swell.

This is exacerbated by women having fewer children, and having them later. Potential godparents could once be gently mopped up over four, five or six offspring. Now, like commuters on an ever more truncated British Rail service, the godparents have to be packed in more tightly. The 38-year-old mother, honing the list of godparents for her firstborn, is conscious that subsequent children might not be physically possible. So this might be her only chance to include her childhood friend and the school-friend and the flatmate and the office friend and the parents of her existing godchildren and the rich bachelor with a powerboat in Villefranche. And since we travel more, for pleasure and business, we make more friends abroad, and so increasingly at christenings there is the added presence of a mysterious Boston, Tokyo

or Hong Kong godfather too. The godparents boom can also be partially explained by darker factors. Ewa Lewis, the *Tatler* social editor, who has 12 godchildren, despite training as a child psychologist, points out that divorce tends to scatter the godparents. "Every time another of our best friends splits up, bang goes another godparent." In virtually every marriage, it is the wife who remembers the godchildren's birthdays, irrespective of whether they are her own or her husband's. After an acrimonious break-up, with friends obliged to take sides, it is unlikely that the former wife will continue to send presents to her ex's godchildren. For this reason, Mrs Lewis recommends that parents start with a healthy complement at the font. There is a theory, too, that in a recession there's a lot to be said for adding a couple of extra-rich godparents to the mix.

Where exactly, you may wonder, does spirituality stand in all this? In the mind of most godparents, if they cared to admit it, well back. This is not for lack of trying by the Church of England. Since the late Eighties, just when godparents were proliferating, an increasingly fundamentalist Church has frowned upon private christenings, viewing them as overwhelmingly social and stand-offish. No records are kept of



Is it worth it? For each new godchild you take on, you must reckon on (in today's money) a minimum of £3,000

how many of the 186,200 annual baptisms of babies under the age of one are private, but it is estimated by the Church to have slipped below 5 per cent. A spokesman for Church House told me that "except in extraordinary circumstances, for instance an emergency baptism in hospital, the Alternative Service Prayer Book requires the administration of baptism in the course of public worship. Baptism is all about becoming a member of the family of God. If the family of God is not there, a great nonsense is being promoted. 'Hole-in-the-wall baptisms' are not encouraged," he added sternly.

In a growing number of parishes, it is not just the parents who must be active worshippers to secure a christening but all the godparents too. St Mary's, Gillingham, in Kent, is currently clamping down and doesn't permit anyone at all to become a godparent unless they can prove six months of regular Anglican church-going. At a time of rapidly declining membership, I am surprised the Church feels it is in a position to make these demands.

Modern parents, conversely, attach increasing significance to their godparents' character rather than creed. Roman Catholics, Jews, Greek Orthodox and agnostics all regularly stand godparent at Church of England christenings. Having just totted them all up, I find that my own children have equal numbers of C of E and non-C of E godparents. Nobody has ever questioned me about my own faith or anybody else's before a christening. Nor is there anything in the service to disturb a non-Anglican. The vicar announces at the beginning, "All those who bring children to be baptised (ie the parents) must affirm their allegiance to Christ". Godparents later declare, "I turn to Christ. I believe and trust in Him." All reassuringly woolly, and no problem either of course for Hindus or Muslims since they view Jesus as a prophet. Being tentatively asked

whether you'd consider becoming a godparent is the warmest compliment short of a marriage proposal, implying as it does that you are a good enough friend (in both senses) of the baby's parents and that they expect to go on seeing you for the next 20 years. It is a role that exposes you to much of the fun but none of the responsibility of a child's life. Your sole realistic obligation is to indulge them. You can plan treats. You can give godchildren presents they really want, but which you would consider too hideous to buy for your own children. One of my happiest Saturday afternoons this year was spent choosing for a god-daughter three frog-faced, pink-haired trolls, and inflicting them upon her parents' impeccable post-modern house. If your godchildren grow up successful, you bask in their glory; if they end up a mess, it's not your fault.

For some reason, probably the mixture of ages, family and friends, christenings are great parties; the service swift and inspiring, the status of the godparents unambiguous, the baby's giggles infectious. And then, 15 years later, the confirmation: another gargantuan lunch at a local hotel.

So what else does a modern godparent do? The New York godfathers to one of our children sent us a letter detailing what he sees as his duties: "1) Suitable birthday and Christmas gifts each year, with an American theme (this has translated into Davy Crockett racoon hats and baseball gloves); 2) Interesting summer jobs in New York when teenage years arrive; 3) Act as sounding-board for complaints about stuffy and over-restrictive parents." Unless you are intending to be a dormant godparent, publicly reviled by your godchildren for never giving presents ("Dear Godmother Clare, Thank you for the cricket pads you gave me for Christmas. My Godfather Nicholas sent

me nothing as per usual" etc etc), then it isn't cheap. An adequate christening present always seems to cost £100, whether you take the enamel cuff-links route or the Beatrix Potter books. A really generous present such as gold engraved cuff-links is five

times as much. Then there are pre-christening baby presents, at least 18 years of birthdays and Christmases. Sooty show tickets, the Royal Tournament, Thorpe Park, confirmation (once a Bible, now it is brooches for girls, a putter for boys), an extra-generous wed-

ding present. Even then it doesn't end. Once the obligations of godparents were discharged at confirmation. Now you're a lifer. Half of my own kind godparents still send me, at the age of 36, Christmas parcels of books and sponges. For each new godchild you take on, you must reckon on, in today's money, a minimum of £3,000.

● This article appears in the Christmas edition of *The Spectator*. The author is managing editor of *Candle Magazine*.

"Hello, I lead such a COMPLICATED life, what should I do?"



Your sole realistic obligation is to indulge them

"Save on UK long distance calls with MERCURY, it's SIMPLE, goodbye."



FreeCall 0500 500 400 or fill in the coupon

Mercury offer guaranteed savings on long distance and international calls (compared to current BT basic prices before any promotions or discounts are applied).

Annual charge £11.75 (inc VAT at 17.5%). Service available to 90% of homes, subject to status. Details and prices correct at 1.9.93.

Please send me a free brochure describing the benefits of Mercury's Residential Service. Post to Mercury Communications Ltd, Sales Enquiries, FREEPOST, PO BOX 49, BIRMINGHAM B1 1TE.

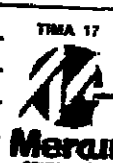
Name: (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel (STD Code): _____ Number: _____

My last quarterly phone bill came to roughly £ _____

A CABLE & WIRELESS COMPANY



UNBEATABLE END OF LONDON B&B FOR 2 P

£3

REGENT PALACE HOTEL £60

FORTE CR BLOOMSBURY

FORTE CRE REGENT'S P.

HOTEL RUSSIA

THE CUMBERLAND HOTEL

THE STRAND PALACE

0345 40 40 40

REFERENCE C168030

محذرا من الأصل



Antoni*Alison: "We wanted a dress that spoke volumes without the wearer having to say anything; a genuine statement of positive energy."



Debbie Moore - Pineapple: "I went for the Christmas fairy/free spirit look."



Helen Storey: "I wanted something clean, simple and short; for the party season."

Brilliant in black

Take one dress, five designers — and just look at the results

REGARDLESS of the price tag it may bear, there can be little in a woman's wardrobe more valuable than a simple black dress. As an evening option it outshines the sparkly sequin numbers and outrageous ballgowns fit only for Danny La Rue. Long or short, modest or showy, the black dress exudes class, and is synonymous with all things chic.

For these reasons the black dress has become a constant best seller, and continues to make its appearance at social



Fashion
—
IAIN R. WEBB

gatherings throughout the year. It is a regular party-goer.

The promise of the black dress is its adaptability. It can be dressed up or down as you desire. The Times asked five designers to take a black stretch cotton Lycra dress (by Pineapple) and adapt it, by any means, to fit their own particular style. The results,

which range from the simply pretty to the dramatically different, prove that regardless of its usefulness, the black dress need never be considered boring.



Ben de Lisi: "Lightness and texture for this season." The New RenaisCance: "Fun"



UNBEATABLE
END OF YEAR
LONDON BREAKS
B&B FOR 2 PEOPLE FROM

£35

Prices per night for 2 people for one or more nights

£35

REGENT PALACE HOTEL

£60

FORTE CREST BLOOMSBURY

£75

FORTE CREST ST. JAMES'S

£45

THE KENSINGTON CLOSE

£79

FORTE CREST REGENT'S PARK

£50

THE STRAND PALACE

£84

THE CUMBERLAND HOTEL

FORTE GRAND WALDORF

TO FIND OUT MORE OR TO MAKE YOUR BOOKING CONTACT YOUR LOCAL TRAVEL AGENT OR CALL

0345 40 40 40

BY 23RD DECEMBER 1993 QUOTING REFERENCE G168030

FORTE HOTELS

All hotel bookings subject to availability with a limited number of rooms available at these promotional rates. Prices are per room per night including bed & breakfast for up to 2 adults. Offer valid only on hotels listed above and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Up to 2 children under 12 stay free when sharing a twin room with 2 adults at all hotels (subject to availability of a suitable room). Private bathrooms are not available at the Regent Palace Hotel. Bookings must be completed by 30th December 1993. Offer available in U.K. residents only.

Antoni*Alison: "The dress was used as our medium to convey some best possible thoughts. The dress was embroidered and printed with these words. It cost us our time and energy and gave us pleasure."

Debbie Moore - Pineapple: "I cut out the neck and sleeves to give a scooped, off the shoulder, capped sleeves look and I cut a V into the back. The good thing about the fabric is that it doesn't fray or ladder, even after washing; it just slightly rolls. The trick is to cut with care and cut less than you think you will need to. I kept the length because you can always fold it over at the hip, which has a useful girdling effect, if you want it to be shorter. I customised it with Christmas decorations from Bantalls in Kingston upon Thames. The grapevine garland was very handy and easy to work with and cost £19.95. I interspersed paper rosebuds and worked them into the vine, and with the remainder I made a garland. The rosebuds cost £2.25 a bunch and I only used one bunch. I wanted to do something that anyone could do at home; you don't even need to be able to sew, you can just attach with safety pins and then take the decorations off and still have a great basic dress to wear."

Helen Storey: "I chopped the sleeves off and made these into a bag; lowered the back to give it a deep plunge; reshaped the front, chopped the hem to a mini length and added a band of lace to a false hem. The lace I used costs about £5 a metre, and a metre is about what was used. For me the original length was neither one thing or another. I was thinking of

Christmas and the party season, as this is a silhouette we always sell well."

Ben de Lisi: "I tied the dress in knots and soaked it in a bleach and water solution for three hours and then dried it. I used regular household bleach which makes it a very cheap process. Alternatively you can fill a spray pump and spray the bleach on. I wanted to change the black Lycra to a more aged aubergine colour. I didn't cut the dress at all, but left it the shape it was. From my Autumn/Winter 1993 collection I used a hand painted silk velvet fabric to make a sarong which could be draped over the shoulders or tied at the waist or under the bust. Normally in my collection this would cost about £190. The fabric added the Ben de Lisi signature. I didn't see the point of changing a shape that already worked so well. The key is not to redo but to enhance." Shoes by Russell & Bromley. £110 (071-629 6903).

The New RenaisCance: "We cut the dress into a simple short tube, made straps out of two lengths of ribbon and covered it with our version of sequins, which were made by laser printing onto a laminated surface, then destroying the image and then putting it back together. We trimmed the dress with feathers and covered the sleeves with them to make a bolero. We customised shoes to go with the outfit. The whole thing cost us a couple of hundred pounds. We wanted something that was glamorous, beautiful, and exciting. This is conspicuous enjoyment. You cannot be shy and retiring in this dress, you have to have fun."

Original black Lycra dress, £45. Other black Lycra dresses in the range are from £25-£80. Available from Pineapple, 6a Langley Street, WC2 (071-836 4006) and selected branches of Miss Selfridge nationwide

Photographs: CHRIS DAWES. Hair: James Dodds for Anthony Yacomine. Make-up: Liam Dunn. Stylist: Rachel Collins

'ELEGANT LOOKS!'

'UNRIVALLED APPEAL!'

Get acquainted with the most successful executive of 1993. The BMW 525iSE at £25,850. "Elegant looks, beautifully balanced handling and unrivalled driver appeal." (Autocar & Motor)



THE ULTIMATE DRIVING MACHINE
For further information Freephone 0800 325600.

PRICE INCLUDES VAT AND 3 YEAR BMW WARRANTY BUT EXCLUDES ROAD FUND LICENCE AND AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF £475 DELIVERY AND NUMBER PLATE. PRICE CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

TT 17.11.93/12

Matthew Parris



■ Any aliens entering the galaxy should check in at the European Parliament's reception desk

Every so often, a story comes our way which is so good that it fills a columnist with dismay. His journalistic skills are no longer needed. The thing he is employed for — literary "spin" — is useless, almost a distraction. Seated at my typewriter this Sunday morning, December 19, on the table before me an array of Christmas cards, picturing sky-borne angels and radiant stars in the east. I am in just such a quandary.

Beside me on my desk lies a copy of the European Parliament's draft report, CEC EN/PR/23323, from the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology, *On The Proposal To Set Up A European Centre For Sightings Of Unidentified Flying Objects*.

What can you say? Surely it's a spoof? It cannot be true, can it? Or, if true, the report must surely contain that it would be pure madness for the European Parliament to make recommendations like this? But, oh my beloved readers, it is not a spoof: it is indeed true, and the document concludes by urging that just such an institution be approved.

The "rapporteur" (not a word, so far as I know, with any English meaning, but I suppose it means he wrote the report) is a Mr Tullio Regge. There is also a Mr Di Rupo in some way involved, but one can never quite work out what's what and who's who from these European documents. Maybe one could learn, but life is short.

Anyway, one thing is clear, that: A. Whereas, for over half a century, the public at large has been thrown into confusion by constant sightings of unidentified flying objects... and...

B. Whereas more reliable and truthful information needs to be provided...

...it seems the parliament is now to consider either the setting up of its own centre for research and information on UFO sightings, or (and this is the more modest suggestion made by the rapporteur) taking the French institute already engaged in this work — SEPR (Service for Assessment of Atmospheric Re-Entry Phenomena) — and assigning it "a Community-wide role and Community status".

And Community money, I don't mind betting, in fact there's no need to bet: Any additional costs which might arise as a result of SEPR's role must be covered by agreements between the French government and other EC member states.

In other words, us. It's a fascinating report we've commissioned, fellow-travellers. In Mr Regge's defence, it must be said that he does not seem

The theory that aliens have established a base in the asteroid belt cannot be ruled out

himself to have been convinced of the arrival of alien immigrants, alien spacecraft, or alien messages, on our planet. Though... the theory that aliens have established a base in the asteroid belt cannot be ruled out, there have been, he says, no sightings. As to the existence of alien civilisations on Venus, Mercury or Mars, Mr Regge advises Euro-MPs that this is unlikely. Venus is too hot, Mercury has no atmosphere, and Mars looks quite empty, he says.

What a joy it is to think that not so many months from now we shall be choosing from our own nation a lucky few to attend the European Parliament, there to benefit from this kind of education!

Our intrepid rapporteur also assesses the claim that earthbound science misses the evidence of alien intrusion, because these extraterrestrials have developed "supertechnologies", allowing them to travel, undetected, 40,000,000,000km here from the closest star in a shorter time than the 42,000 years it takes the

saucer containing aliens 10ft high capable of telepathic communication with the Russians. Euro-MPs should entertain none of this sort of nonsense, advises Mr Regge, plainly concerned that to an assembly that can believe in the common agricultural policy, the arrival of a flying banana from outer space might seem unremarkable.

And not just to the European Assembly. Apparently (he notes) a majority of educated French people are convinced of the truth of various parascientific beliefs, of which UFO sightings are a prime example.

"The social, and hence political, message of the above considerations should be very clear," the report warns. Belgium, it reminds us, is now in the grip of a mania for sightings of triangular UFOs travelling at very high speeds, especially over Liege.

I should have thought that you have there the final refutation of the case for UFOs. The thought that a super-intelligent being, having travelled 40,000,000,000km in search of human civilisation, should on arrival choose Belgium for its holiday, is frankly risible. Is there intelligent life in Brussels? I think we should be told.

The Führer would not have been convinced by the comparisons with Vladimir Zhirinovskiy

Not Hitler's kind of Fascist

What would Hitler have made of it all? He has, after all, been compared to Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in almost every newspaper in the world. Would he have been pleased that his policies, including nationalism, anti-Semitism and aggression, have again been brought into serious public discussion? Or would he have rejected Mr Zhirinovskiy as an impostor and been irritated by the comparison? One should remember that Hitler was a monster, but did not see himself as a monster.

He would certainly have been suspicious of Mr Zhirinovskiy's nationalism, simply because it is Russian. Hitler did indeed admire Stalin. In July 1942, a year after the invasion of Russia, he told his colleagues after dinner, "Stalin, too, must command our unconditional respect. In his own way, he is a hell of a fellow! He knows his models. Genghis Khan and the others, very well, and the scope of his industrial planning is only exceeded by our Four Year Plan." The following month he commented, "Stalin is half beast, half giant. To the social side of life he is utterly indifferent. The people can rot for all he cares. If we had given him another ten years, Europe would have been swept away, as it was at the time of the Huns."

Yet his admiration for Stalin did not extend to the Russian people, whom he despised; this contempt extended to Russian populism, which Mr Zhirinovskiy represents. "We must distinguish between the Fascist popular movement and the popular movement in Russia. The Fascist movement is a spontaneous return to the traditions of ancient Rome. The Russian movement has an essential tendency towards anarchy."

Between 1941 and 1944 Martin Bormann arranged for Hitler's table talk to be recorded after dinner at his headquarters; it was first published in 1953, and republished in 1973 with an introduction by Hugh Trevor-Roper. We know, therefore, what Hitler's political ideas were during that period and we also have his anecdotes of childhood and youth. These conversations were not intended for immediate publication, but are more like Boswell's record of Samuel Johnson's conversation, so the table talk gives a franker view of Hitler's views than *Mein Kampf*, which was written when he was in prison 20 years earlier. He thought the Russians needed a strong and ruthless leader, and that such a leader had to impose his will on an inherently recalcitrant Russian people.

This view was supported by his own racial theories. "The Aryan peoples are particularly active. In the eyes of the Russian, the principal support of civilisation is vodka. His ideal consists in never doing anything but the indispensable. Our conception of work (work, and then more of it) is one that he submits to as if it were a real curse."

"For the Russian the return to the state of nature is a return to primitive forms of life. The family exists, the female looks after her children, like the female of the hare, with all the feelings of a mother. But the Russian doesn't want anything more. When he collapses and should yield, the Russian bursts into lamentation. This will return to the state of nature is exhibited in his revolution. For the Russian, the typical form of revolution is nihilism."

This discussion came less than a fortnight after the German invasion

of Russia in June 1941. It was followed a couple of months later by a similar view: "It's not a mere chance that the inventor of anarchism was a Russian. Unless other peoples, beginning with the Vikings, had imported some rudiments of organisation into Russian humanity, the Russians would still be living like rabbits. One cannot change rabbits into bees or ants. These insects have the faculty of living in a state of society — but rabbits haven't."

terrible crimes, including the Holocaust, but an understanding of his career has to start with an understanding of this Nazi political ideology. It is clear from his table talk that these views were sincere, and not a mere demagogic pretence.

Hitler had a different view of the necessary role of a Slav leader like Stalin and an Aryan leader like himself or, with some qualifications, Mussolini. A Slav leader has to browbeat an inherently anarchic people into achieving anything at all, as does an Aryan leader who has conquered a Slav people. Yet he could say of his own role: "We have seen what a people is capable of, when it is led. All possibilities exist in it, for good as well as for evil. The duty of National Socialism inevitably boils down to this: all that is best in the people should be allowed ceaselessly to develop."

For this reason he repeatedly argued that Nazism was not for export: it was an Aryan creed for an Aryan people. Nor would he have had much sympathy with Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's self pity, which he would have regarded as an unmanly expression of the attitudes of an inferior race. Hitler's own references to his youth are not particularly self pitying. He refers to his father, in a rather patronising way, as an old man who kept bees. He tells the story of getting drunk — the only time in his life — on his high school graduation day, and how on the train going home he mistakenly used his

Adolf Hitler had a theory of society. He believed that the function of a leader was to secure the survival of his race, in a Darwinist sense. He believed that the Aryans were the highest race, with the greatest potential for survival, because of their superior willpower, their attitude to work, their creative energy, their discipline and their resilience. He regarded the Jews as hostile to this Aryan ideal, partly because of their commercial skills and partly because of their internationalism. He regarded Slavs, as well as blacks and most Asians, as inferior because they lacked the Aryan virtues. These views led him to commit atrocious and

certificate as lavatory paper. He was happy in the army; he was "passionately fond of soldiering". His childhood and youth may not have been happy, but as a man of 50 he did not harp on that. He was notably a vegetarian who loved dogs.

Hitler had in common with Mr Zhirinovskiy a preference for, and an appeal to, the dispossessed working class. "Since the beginning of my political activity, I have made it a rule not to curry favour with the bourgeoisie. The political attitude of that class is marked by the sign of cowardice. I aimed, instead, to awaken the enthusiasm of the working class for my ideas." Hitler built his party on the support of the impoverished masses, as Mr Zhirinovskiy is trying to do.

Hitler would also have opposed the laissez-faire reforms of the Yeltsin administration. He believed that Europe should have a self-sufficient economy, not dependent on Asia or the United States. His views would favour the division of the world into protectionist blocs and a Soviet Union seeking self sufficiency.

Yet Hitler would hardly have thought that Mr Zhirinovskiy had a serious chance of success. He might have considered that Mr Zhirinovskiy was making an Aryan appeal — the call to reverse the current trend of world history — to a Slav people with a preference for vodka and anarchy. He would have feared another Stalin who would bear the Russian people into reluctant activity. But, as yet, Mr Zhirinovskiy's rhetoric does not have the Stalinist ring. Hitler would, I suspect, have regarded him as a true disciple of Genghis Khan. Indeed, Adolf Hitler could not have believed in the possibility of a Slav Hitler; his view was that "the real frontier is the one that separates the Germanic world from the Slav world". That frontier, for him, was just as much psychological as physical.

William Rees-Mogg

Call it Lazarus syndrome

The outbreak of Tory optimism is misplaced, says Peter Riddell

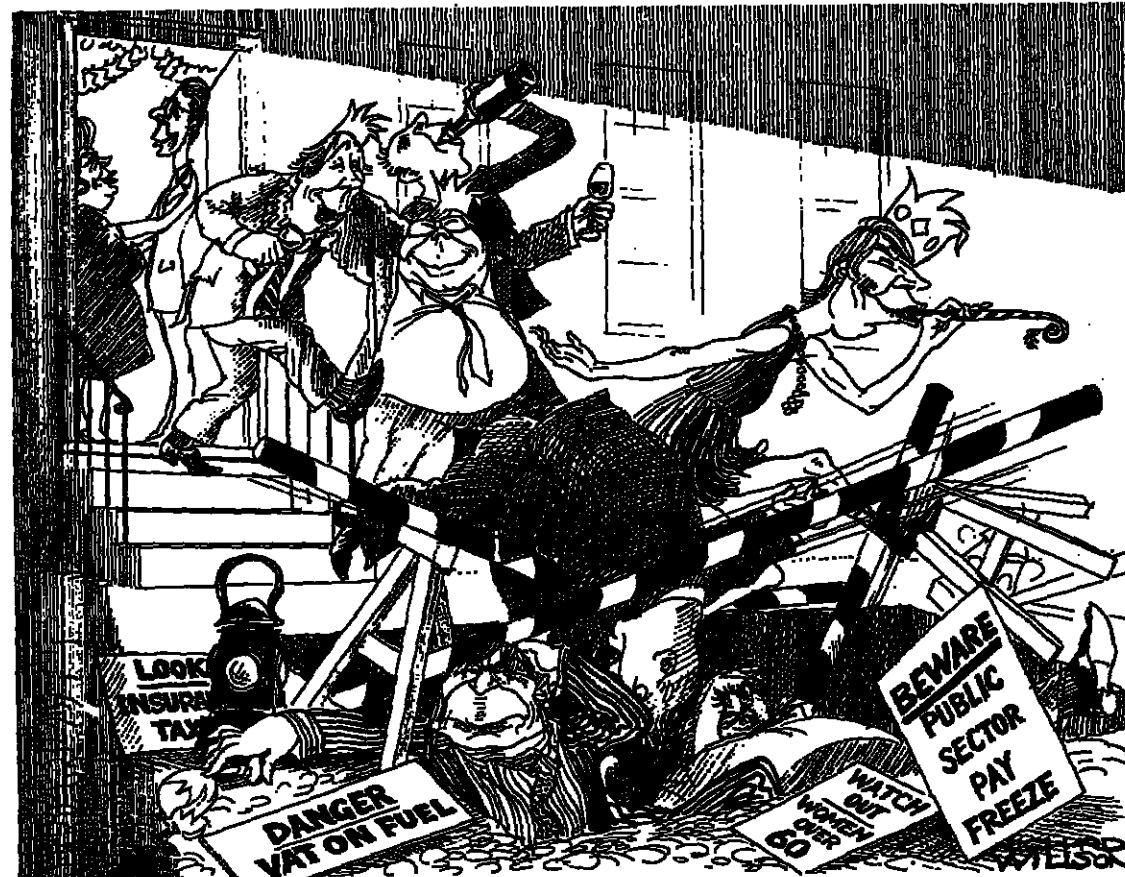
Tory MPs are becoming over-confident. They, not Labour or Liberal Democrat members, have left the Commons for the three-week Christmas recess smiling, talking of "turning points" and the like. But the mood at Westminster is not the same as in the country. The Tories' troubles are far from over.

The Government's predicament remains as it has been since John Major became Prime Minister: dealing with the deep political tensions and economic difficulties left over from the Thatcher era. Mr Major's success in keeping the Tories together in many ways more striking than his difficulties. Several other long-serving administrations have lost power: the Conservatives in America, the Liberal Democrats in Japan, the Christian-Democrat-led regime in Italy. But the Tories have survived against the trend.

The Tory party is now more harmonious than since just after the election. This is partly relief that the bitterly divisive Maastricht saga is over. The much predicted full-scale conflict between left and right in the Commons has turned out to be as exciting and newsworthy as pre-1989 Soviet elections. Kenneth Clarke

outmanoeuvred potential rebels over the Budget by his initial presentation of success at Westminster. Having moved to the brink of a leadership crisis in June and in September (both partly media stimulated), the forces for stability have reasserted themselves. This has been less a question of loyalty, always over-trumped in the Tory party, than of self-preservation.

Mr Major has shown a surer and more authoritative touch since the summer. He has been helped by favourable economic news, falling unemployment, low inflation and a drop in interest rates, and by events, the unpredictable saviour and curse of all politicians. The Gotti trade deal, though flawed, is better than any alternative, and, on Northern Ireland, Mr Major has displayed deter-



mination and negotiating skill in getting as far as he has. He has been able to appear prime ministerial rather than an embattled whip pushed around by fractious MPs.

By contrast, neither opposition party looks comfortable. Labour may enjoy high poll ratings, but few Labour MPs believe these figures will be sustained. John Smith's instinctive gradualism too often borders on passivity. Pacing your party is sensible at this stage of the Parliament, but the occasional burst of speed would help. The latest all-out assault in the Commons has made little impact, apart from forcing MPs to vote late at night, in the process exposing absences on the Labour side.

Mr Smith's victory over one member one vote for some party decisions was vital, but the fierce argument involved seems to have deterred him from going further. He has been prepared to think radically over the constitution. But he has offered little direction on key economic issues, allowing a battle to develop among his lieutenants. No wonder the "modernisers" are depressed.

Paddy Ashdown's frustrations have more to do with being ignored. Elections are the lifeblood of the Liberal Democrats, and in their absence the media pay the party little attention. So its poll ratings have slipped back. Now he faces the challenge of Tower Hamlets, where the steady, and occasionally worse, behaviour of some local leaders has for too long been brushed aside. Mr

RIDDELL ON MONDAY

Mr Clarke must hope for pre-election tax cuts and for an eventual boost to Tory ratings from the spread of economic recovery. But these may not guarantee victory. The hostile reaction to the Budget could be symptomatic of a deeper disillusionment which developed after sterling's forced withdrawal from the exchange-rate mechanism. Mr Smith and Gordon Brown are right repeatedly to talk about Tory "betrayals" on tax and "you can never trust the Tories again". Mr Major is evidently discomfited by them. The biggest swings against the Government have been on measures such as keeping promises, truthfulness and being out of touch with ordinary people.

The public may at last have concluded that it is time for a change even though they cannot themselves quite believe it, with slightly more still expecting the Tories to win the next election than think Labour will. My hunch, however, is that, having weathered the storms of the past 18 months, Mr Major will lead his party into that election.

shared with readers of America's Family Circle magazine her zero-butter, high-octane recipe for chocolate chip cookies. Britain's First Lady has published her recipe for apple pie. Norma Major's recipe for six, featured in South Ribbles Conservative Association's What's Cooking in Parliament? includes lashings of butter, whipping cream and honey. Just as long as Virginia Bottomley doesn't find out...

Art and shopping NOT content with pandering to lovers of upside-down Christmas trees, concrete houses and neon rice paddies, London's Tate Gallery is off in search of a whole new section of art lover — the super-rich, fashion-conscious shopper. To advertise its Picasso exhibition next February, the gallery has persuaded the Knightsbridge store Harvey Nichols to lend it seven window dummies dressed as one of Picasso's seven lovers. Around the dummies will be objects representing each woman — for example the window in which Fernande, a milliner's

daughter, is shown, will be filled with hats. All this, admits a gallery spokesman, is to entice "a new audience. Shoppers in Knights-

Ashdown has been willing to confront the miscreants, although it may mean that the local party splits and loses control of the council. Such firmness could boost Mr Ashdown's standing, as did Neil Kinnock's battle against the Liverpool Militants in 1985. But the affair has exposed the dangers inherent in the party's style of local campaigning and, for once, forced it onto the defensive.

But Tory MPs may be exaggerating the pick-up in their own fortunes and the difficulties of the opposition. The change in mood at Westminster has not been matched outside. Any post-Budget froth should have been blown away by the devastating verdict in the latest MORI poll for *The Times*. The Budget, and Mr Clarke's performance as Chancellor, are rated the second worst since the mid-1970s, only behind Norman Lamont's final statement last March. By big margins, the public regards the Budget as bad for the country and for them personally. Not only will the measures not be felt until next April, just before the local and Euro-elections, but they are only a first instalment. The pain will last.

Mr Clarke must hope for pre-election tax cuts and for an eventual boost to Tory ratings from the spread of economic recovery. But these may not guarantee victory. The hostile reaction to the Budget could be symptomatic of a deeper disillusionment which developed after sterling's forced withdrawal from the exchange-rate mechanism. Mr Smith and Gordon Brown are right repeatedly to talk about Tory "betrayals" on tax and "you can never trust the Tories again". Mr Major is evidently discomfited by them. The biggest swings against the Government have been on measures such as keeping promises, truthfulness and being out of touch with ordinary people.

The public may at last have concluded that it is time for a change even though they cannot themselves quite believe it, with slightly more still expecting the Tories to win the next election than think Labour will. My hunch, however, is that, having weathered the storms of the past 18 months, Mr Major will lead his party into that election.

bridge are aware of fashion and design. We are having an evening for Harvey Nichols account-holders at the gallery."



Madam Cyn goes undercover

BRITAIN'S most famous madam is back in business. Thirteen years after the prison sentence, the subsequent books and two films — *Personal Services* and *Wish You Were Here* — Cynthia Payne is to launch her latest money-making venture, a mail-order company that will provide "glamorous underwear for the older and larger woman". The venture, Personal Collections, will be launched next month with a blaze of publicity in the press. Payne says: "In America they make fancy underwear for older women and bigger women, but not here. I've talked to a lot of women over 40 here and they're very keen."

Such is her belief in the product that the catalogue features Payne herself modelling the lingerie, which comes in silk and satin and is priced

between £20 and £30. If this is a success, Payne promises the same designs in leather and rubber. "The rubber they make nowadays is beautiful stuff, not like the stuff they made 25 years ago. It's very sexy in the touch."

daughter, is shown, will be filled with hats. All this, admits a gallery spokesman, is to entice "a new audience. Shoppers in Knights-

bridge are aware of fashion and design. We are having an evening for Harvey Nichols account-holders at the gallery."

daughter, is shown, will be filled with hats. All this, admits a gallery spokesman, is to entice "a new audience. Shoppers in Knights-

Members only

NO SOONER has the political dust settled over the BBC's *To Play The King*, than news comes of another even more satirical television series on Westminster. Entitled *Faith* and starring Michael Gambon as an MP, it promises to encompass all contemporary political scandals in four hours of viewing.

Illegal arms sales, privacy and press freedom constitute some of Central Television's plot. But much is taken up by a storyline that initially smacks of David Mellor's fall from grace, but gives it a twist. Gambon is set upon by a tabloid press which believes him to be conducting an extramarital affair. After bugging the rendezvous, they find their MP has been seducing his male political assistant.

Playing himself and commenting on these tawdry goings-on is Ken Livingstone, Labour MP for Brent East, who repeats in a mock press interview his sentiments on Mellor's headline-making heterosexual affair in July: "Like most people I don't really care

who he goes to bed with — just so long as it isn't me."

Livingstone is rising in showbusiness. He played a cameo role in the racy drama *A Woman's Guide to Adultery*. And he has just been signed up as Mr Darling in *Peter Pan*, the Radio Scotland pantomime from which Julian Clary was dropped after his remarks about Norman Lamont. "We did pantomimes at the GLC," he explains of his thespian tendencies. "I was always the hero, even though I was never very good."

Video narky

HOW accountable is the BBC? Who better to assess John Birt's glasnost count than Jeanne Vronskaia, London correspondent for *Moscow News*. Vronskaia is furious with the corporation for, she claims, refusing to give her a video of *The Body Parts* business broadcast last month which examined traffic in human body parts in Russia.

Vronskaia, who wrote a report on the programme for her

newspaper, then applied to the programme's editor, John Blake, for a copy to send home. She says: "I cannot understand how they can keep it a secret from Russia. It has been broadcast to the UK."

Blake is standing firm. "What she will not have said is how inaccurate her report of the programme was. There are people who took part in the understanding that it would not be broadcast in Russia. We are talking to the participants and once they are all happy that it should be available then it will be."

While soap opera stars all over the land squeeze into



their sequined rights, a different class of pantomime star is appearing on the boards at the Players Theatre in Charing Cross, London. Simon Masterton-Smith, a bass-baritone best known for his work with the English National Opera, is playing the evil Aladdin in *Aladdin*. Opera singers, he says, could learn a few things from pantomime. "We need more acting ability from opera singers. A singing Brangh — or Arthur Askey would have made a great Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*."

Going critical

MORE glasnost troubles. The National Theatre, for so long a doughy champion for free expression, stands accused of censorship. The latest issue of *InterNational*, its in-house

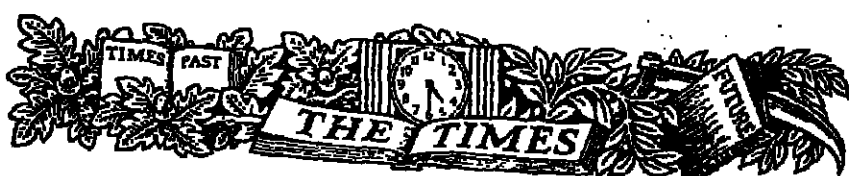
DIARY

magazine which is also distributed to its American patrons, has been withdrawn. The editor, playwright Richard Stoneman, has resigned.

The problem, apparently, was three articles considered overly critical of recent productions. Stoneman had commissioned the journalist Ian Aitken to write about *Absence of War*, and two others to write about *Racing Demon* and *Murmuring Judges*.

Stoneman, unfortunately, is not contactable. Aitken, meanwhile, is furious and snaps: "It looks dangerously like censorship to me." The National is in a pacific mood. A spokesman says: "The issue is not coming out. I don't know why. That's all I know."

Not to be outdone by Hillary Clinton, who last year



CHRISTMAS CHEER

But higher spending may not last beyond Easter

Anyone who went Christmas shopping over the weekend will have been able to judge the strength of the recovery by the length of the queues at the tills. One of last year's most haunting pictures was of an Oxford Street empty when it should have been packed. This year's improvement ought to reassure shopkeepers and economists that growth is underway. But whether it is strong enough to withstand the knocks of next April's tax increases is the question Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, should be pondering over his mince pies.

Recently consumer confidence has been a delicate creature, advancing a few steps and then retreating before the threat of higher taxes or the fear of redundancy. Between last October and this April, optimism about the economy steadily increased. Then came March's tax-raising Budget. Since then, jitteriness has prevailed and, according to MORI, there are now more pessimists than optimists in the country.

Consumer spending is vital to recovery. Growth is not coming from manufacturing: after rising in the first half of this year, output has been completely flat in the second half. Exports are weak because of the recession in Europe and the Chancellor's apparent preference for a strong pound will make export-led growth harder to achieve. Private-sector investment is low and public investment will suffer from next year on. Higher consumption is the only hope.

Anecdotal reports of Christmas shopping suggest spending significantly up on last year. This is backed up by good retail sales figures for October and November after a flat summer. And more good cheer has come from the recent falls in unemployment.

But next April will see the biggest fiscal tightening ever imposed on modern Britain. In higher taxes and lower public spending, the Chancellor proposes to take 2 per cent more out of the gross national product. In later years, that will rise to about 3 per cent. There is a good chance that the recovery will

not be able to survive such a deflationary blow unless monetary policy is relaxed.

The Chancellor professed himself unconcerned about this to the Treasury select committee last week. He has doubtless been told by his economists that any further cut in interest rates could stoke up inflation in the years ahead. These are the same economists who forecast as recently as March that today's underlying inflation would be 34 per cent. This was far too high: it has turned out to be just 2½ per cent.

In fact the Treasury has proved over-optimistic about inflation ever since the end of the last boom. But inexperienced Chancellors dare not seem to be taking risks with inflation. As a result, the risk is of another kind: that next year's tax increases and spending cuts will stop growth in its tracks.

The past few years of recession have dragged the economy well below its trend growth rate. The longer it takes to recover, the more jobs will be permanently lost, the more people will become permanently unemployed and the more equipment will have to be scrapped. In other words, the economy's potential is steadily being shrunk. If Britain is to recover the ground it has lost, it has to grow faster than average in this first year or two after the recession. No time could be better than now to cut interest rates, while inflationary pressures are very low, there is plenty of spare capacity and sterling is relatively strong.

If Mr Clarke waits until next spring, he may have left it too late. Tax increases affect people's spending instantly; lower interest rates take many months to feed through. Moreover his Government is rapidly losing what reputation it had for economic competence. An ICM poll in yesterday's *Observer* found that only 20 per cent of people thought the Conservatives could be trusted to run the economy well and just 21 per cent thought the Tories had made the country more prosperous. The Chancellor has very little time to prove them wrong.

TIME FOR A STATESMAN

The Palestinians deserve better leadership

If the ambitious timetable for the Declaration of Principles, signed with much theatre attendant, had been adhered to, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat should have concluded a protocol on the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and Jericho last Monday. That they did not, and that not a single Israeli soldier has been withdrawn, will only strengthen the hand of the extremists, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. At present, the sway of these movements amounts to no more than a third of non-diaspora Palestinians. Their support will now spread, as will their view of the accord as a Palestinian Versailles.

Extremists come not only in Islamic garb. Israeli settlers in the occupied territories have also launched a violent campaign of rejection, which will only escalate in the event of an Israeli withdrawal. Yesterday a former Chief Rabbi, Shlomo Goren, urged soldiers to disobey commands to evict Jewish settlers. A government spokesman described this as an act of sedition. Legal action ought to be taken against the Rabbi; since September 13, the Israeli authorities have been less than wholehearted in their imposition of discipline on recalcitrant settlers. This has not nourished Palestinian morale.

Jewish extremists can, however, be controlled. The Israeli Government has the military capacity and, democratically elected, a political mandate as well. The peace accord has the imprimatur of the Knesset. Islamic extremists, on the other hand, will not easily be controlled. They do not recognise Mr Arafat's authority. To them he is a quisling, and many have vowed

to kill him. But theirs is a menace that has flouted itself openly. The real threat to the accord, with suffocating irony, comes from Mr Arafat himself.

The leader of the PLO is an autocrat. After Washington, he has engaged, unabashedly, in what Morgenthau called "the politics of prestige". His triumphalist strutting on the world stage has been a major error of judgment, alienating him from others in his organisation, from Palestinian intellectuals, and from hapless camp-dwellers whose hopes for a peaceful future rest on his unstable shoulders. Palestinians under Israeli occupation (which has been harsh and, at times, capricious) have absorbed, through observation and osmosis, the lessons of democracy. They are highly politicised, versed not just in the rhetoric of human rights, but in the fine print. Mr Arafat's brand of egotism, paranoia and cronyism puts his people at risk. Discontent with his methods will be seized upon by opponents of the accord to discredit the accord itself.

To the dismay of donors, and of Palestinian technocrats, Mr Arafat has appointed himself head of the bodies charged with the disbursement of vast sums of money. He has failed to attend to the drafting of a constitution that would entrench democracy and civil rights in time for elections to a Palestinian Council on July 13. Hanan Ashrawi's recent setting up of a human rights commission, intended to act as a check on Mr Arafat's personal authority, is damning. He should prepare for accountable government, or reconsider his position as "president" of a Palestine *manqué*. The PLO needs a statesman and democrat, not a panjandrum.

JULES ET KEVIN

The French love our names but miss their nuances

Class, it seems, knows no boundaries of language or geography. From across the Channel comes the heart-warming news that Essex man and Essex girl have found their Gallic soul-mates: Kevin and Cindy. In the tower blocks in Val de Marne, the exotic appeal of an Anglo-Saxon name, preferably one made more glorious by an American soap opera, knows no bounds. This year one in 20 baby boys was named Kevin, making it by far the most popular name in France. Even among Arab immigrants, Kevin, pronounced the English way, was way up with Muhammad and Mustafa, along with Teddy, Bobby and Steve.

The guardians of French culture are equally powerless to maintain the purity of Gallic tradition among the nation's baby girls. For France's television-watching classes, Sandy, Sandra, Cathy and Nellie hold the same irresistible lure that has made Michelle, Nicole, Danielle and Charlene firm favourites in Basildon and Bootle. Indeed a generation from now sociologists will be able to pin-point what it was that nearly scuttled the Gatt accord. Was it really to protect the French film industry that President Mitterrand took the world to the brink of a trade war, or was it that the chattering classes could not bear to hear of yet another girl named Sue-Ellen?

It was only in January that the state gave up trying to preserve the monopoly of the old names. Until then, no French father could pass on his love of football or Hollywood to

posterity unless the chosen name was among the category of saints that have led France to glory. Now one more plank of the French state's dirigisme has fallen to the clamour for individual choice. In they have come: Peggy, David, Jonathan, Christopher and Jeremy, with nary a hint that once these appellations of the English aristocracy were themselves the choice of the parvenus in Norman Britain, tired as they were of Edmund, Edward and Athelstan.

But not all the country has taken advantage of its nominal liberty to turn its back on its culture. The bourgeoisie has rediscovered ancient *glorie* and with it the hyphen. Charles-Henri, Charles-Edouard, Pierre-Etienne, Louis and Thibaut conjure up to today's image-makers chateaux and fine wines, horses, literature and ancient money. And even the ancient Breton names, Patrick for example, are common among today's thrusting television commentators.

Fashion in names comes and goes in France, just as in Britain. Jules has just returned from the wilderness. Today's hapless Kevins may find in 20 years' time that they too are stuck with a losing image and, like their British counterparts a year ago, will strike back with a campaign to rehabilitate an ancient name now sadly besmirched. But still, association is a powerful misleader. Would the classic film have so entranced the world if it had been Jules et Kevin, and the two young men had both been in love with Sandra?

Europe's decisions 'taken in the dark'

From Mr Leolin Price, QC

Sir, I sympathise with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other European finance ministers who rightly complained (reports, December 6, 11) at the last-minute delivery of M Jacques Delors's discussion document on growth, competitiveness and jobs before the European summit meeting. I too have been unable to obtain a copy, yet this paper has been the subject of tantalising partial reporting and publicity, wholly inadequate for any understanding of what is involved.

If an interested person cannot have access to such an apparently important paper before decisions are made about it the only conclusion is that, after Maastricht as before it, decision-making is not intended to be influenced by any public debate or by any informed advance public discussion.

On an earlier occasion an initiative of the Commission's president was expounded by him in a speech referring to some details in an important but unpublished paper. In reaction to that initiative and political speech, I sought a copy of the paper; but the president's office told me that it was confidential and not for publication at that time! The president could make a political speech referring to it: I could not make my contribution to the political debate which he appeared to have started.

Now that so much governmental power has been transferred to the institutions of the Community it is more important than ever to ensure that decisions are made only after proper opportunity for public debate and, however tiresome this may be for the arrogant and impatient politicians at the Commission, advance publication of all proposals.

Yours truly,
LEOLIN PRICE,
10 Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, WC2,
December 17.

Arafat meeting

From Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick

Sir, The rabbis of the Liberal and Reform movements in this country applaud the courageous decision of Judge Israel Finestein, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, to attend a meeting with Chairman Arafat (report, later editions, December 15).

We do not close our eyes to the tremendous wrongs the PLO has committed. We would urge Arafat to distance himself publicly from all acts of terrorism — but we know that peace can never come unless people are prepared to talk.

In our tradition we are enjoined to be like Aaron, who was prepared to go to endless lengths to bring about peace between warring parties.

Yours faithfully,
JACQUELINE TABICK
(Chairman), Council of Reform and Liberal Rabbis,
The Sternberg Centre for Judaism,
80 East End Road, N3,
December 15.

Quality standards

From Mr Marco Torquati

Sir, Your news report, "Polluters 'let off hook' by ruling" (December 10) on the decision in favour of Eastern Counties Leather against Cambridge Water Company contains comment solely from environmental groups. It might have given readers who did not study the accompanying Law Report the idea that wrongdoers had got away with it lightly.

The "offence" of the tannery was not having foreseen that some of its effluents dating back to the 1950s would have rendered water from a nearby borehole in 1983 undrinkable according to standards set by a 1980 EC Directive. Yet water from the same hole only four years earlier had met all quality standards at the time. A converse decision might have left many UK old-established law-abiding companies facing similar liability claims. The tannery dates back to 1879. Such companies are leading the way in the environmental challenge and adapting their products and processes to meet the standards of the day.

Yours faithfully,
MARCO TORQUATI
(Senior Environment Executive),
The Association of British Chambers of Commerce,
9 Tufton Street, SW1,
December 10.

'Guillotine' proposal

From Mr A. Leighton Davis

Sir, The Labour Party's truculent reaction (report, December 15) to the Government's proposal to use the parliamentary "guillotine" to cut short debate on Bills, puts me in mind of a remark made by the then Warden of Keble College, Oxford, in the late Forties when the first post-war Labour Government under Clement Attlee was making extensive use of the same instrument.

The guillotine, he said — with a twinkle in his eye — is a "labour-saving device".

Yours faithfully,
A. LEIGHTON DAVIS,
5 Great College Street,
Westminster, SW1,
December 15.

Will the local government review simply end in tiers?

From the Chief Executive and Town Clerk of Canterbury City Council

Sir, Sir John Boynton's complacent essay ("New round of town hall reforms are unnecessary and unwanted", *The Times* Essay, December 13) was very much the point of view of a distinguished practitioner who "made it" under a system now overtaken by events.

Those of his former colleagues, like myself, who have been struggling to make the best of the present compromise of two tiers (i.e. county and district) are unconvinced.

For the last 20 years we have seen duplication of effort, back-passing, unproductive aggravation and a lack of accountability. We now desperately need a fundamental improvement in the quality and purpose of local government. This opportunity must not be missed.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER GAY,
Chief Executive and Town Clerk,
Canterbury City Council,
Military Road, Canterbury, Kent,
December 14.

From Mr H. T. D. Marwood

Sir, Sir John Boynton accurately reflects many of the current anxieties that exist in county government about planned changes to local government.

In particular, he focuses on the financial cost of the exercise. Behind this lies the enormous and hidden burden that is now inflicted on county and district authorities alike, as the energies of staff are diverted away from providing services into the mammoth task of gathering information to present to the Local Government Commission.

Here in Hertfordshire many people share Sir John's cynicism about the Government's faith in unitary authorities. We note also that Whitehall, while wanting to demolish the traditions of the two-tier system which

has served us so well, is itself imposing another layer of central government through the establishment of regional joint working arrangements for its own departments.

Sir John recalls the "genuinely local" pre-1974 local government structure. In a county such as ours, with a collection of small, local communities, the autonomy once granted to the urban and rural districts is still missed.

Our answer has been to attempt to reintroduce local dialogue and decision-making, not via an imposed blueprint, but by working in conjunction with district and parish councils and alongside local people, local organisations and local businesses in new community-government initiatives.

The concept of local government as an "enabler" is worthless unless there is co-operation across all public service boundaries. A review of local government based on the premise that local authorities can act in isolation is doomed to failure.

Yours etc.
TREVOR MARWOOD
(Chairman, Hertfordshire County Council, May 1991 — May 1993),
East Lodge, Park Road,
Tring, Hertfordshire,
December 15.

From Mr David Macklin

Sir, It is ironic that the object of the last major review of local government, undertaken by Lord Redcliffe-Maud in 1969, was to examine the problems created by the existence of unitary authorities too small to discharge satisfactorily the full range of local government services and too proud to acknowledge the fact.

Now the pressure from district councils is to recreate that problem, which will lead inevitably to another review within 20 years, with all the cost of fighting corners, let alone carrying through the reform.

The former county boroughs had no

responsibility to serve the people within their catchment but outside their boundary. This led to wasteful and complicated inter-authority arrangements and payments. It is naïve of anyone to believe that Chinese walls will not be built and that inter-authority co-operation will last much beyond the euphoria of the change.

I am, Sir, still your humble servant, although no longer a serving local government officer,
DAVID MACKLIN,
Randalls,
Victoria Road, Topsham,
Exeter, Devon,
December 15.

From Mr John Peake

Sir, Sir John Boynton is quite right to question whether a root and branch change in local government is needed. Change may be required in some areas, but not necessarily in all: a unitary authority might be appropriate in an urban area, for instance, but rural areas could well keep the present structure.

The problem with a unitary authority is that so many decisions can be taken "in house", where, for instance, a new road is planned, a county authority has to consult with the district, which has the planning facilities to question in depth.

Many local government operations need to be looked at strategically and very often the county provides the right sized unit for this to happen. In many rural counties there is a case for the county and districts or boroughs to put forward suggestions for improving the present set-up, perhaps by involving parish councils much more closely. But, please, not change just for its own sake.

Yours etc.
JOHN PEAKE,
Corscombe Court,
Dorchester, Dorset,
December 14.

Consumers give two cheers for Gatt

From the Director of the National Consumer Council

Sir, Your editorial on Gatt ("Beautiful victory", December 16) is right to point out that the most immediate effect of the agreement reached in Geneva will be to lift the threat of trade wars. We should all be grateful for that.

But, as you indicate, in many respects the deal is a disappointment compared with hopes at the outset. We in this council, together with our colleagues in the International Organisation of Consumer Unions, have consistently argued for a reduction in protectionism, and have seen the Gatt process as the means to achieve this. Whilst this agreement will benefit consumers, the gains are likely to be modest and may take years to become apparent.

For instance, the Gatt agreement has only reduced, not eliminated, the damaging effects of the common agricultural policy, European farm surpluses will continue to be dumped on the world markets at below the cost of production, European consumers will still have to pay for this, and farmers

in countries outside Europe will still be damaged.

We are also concerned that the time limit of ten years for the abolition of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement, which adds an estimated 5 per cent to the cost of clothes, is unnecessarily long. There is particular cause for concern given that the MFA has been "temporary" since its inception nearly 20 years ago. The new World Trade Organisation (WTO) must ensure that this time the agreement sticks.

We welcome, as do you, the establishment of the WTO. It should give the members a proper opportunity to negotiate multilaterally. We must move away from the bilateral trials of strength which characterised the closing stages of the Uruguay Round in which the EC and USA slogged it out while the remaining 100-odd members were expected to sit on their hands meekly like spectators at a prize-fight.

Yours sincerely,
RUTH EVANS, Director,
National Consumer Council,
20 Grosvenor Gardens, SW1.

Genes and genius

From Dr K. Manis

Sir, On Saturday, March 7, 1953, Cambridge won the greatest ever race. In its Cavendish Laboratory, Francis Crick and James Watson completed the full model of DNA. Their discovery heralded a new epoch in biology, and soon revolutionised methods in industry, agriculture, medicine and genetics. It is sad but not odd that in his article on genes ("On being spliced to J. S. Bach", December 13) William Rees-Mogg does not mention, even in passing, the men or the place.

Francis Crick, when he realised that many people had never heard of Mendel's laws of inheritance (also not mentioned in the article), wrote "A surprising number of highly educated people are not aware of these discoveries, and of those who are, many feel (with Ronald Reagan) that there must be a catch in it somewhere".

Yours faithfully,
KOSTA MANIS,
18 Knoll Road, Bexley, Kent,
December 13.

Nicely judged

From Mr D. J. Duffy

Sir, I refer to the article (December 17) headed "Bar Council tackles boring lawyers". The adjoining piece is unjustly offensive to Mr Robert Rhodes, QC, by referring to his closing speech in the Barlow Clowes case.

I am the partner in the firm of solicitors who instructed Mr Rhodes to lead for the defence in that case. It is true that his closing speech took six and a half days, but it was not a minute too long. The case itself was immensely complex, and the documentary exhibits and statements alone filled some 200 heavy lever-arch files.

There were a great many difficult issues in the case which had to be analysed for the benefit of a lay jury by Mr Rhodes so as to show the difference between his client and the principal defendants (who were in the event convicted by the jury). This careful analysis of the mass of evi-

From Mr C. J. B. Flint

Sir, In his article on genius William Rees-Mogg refers to the Darwins as a "great Cambridge family".

He has no doubt overlooked the fact that Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles, settled first in Lichfield, and then in Derby and was strongly associated with the great swathe of genius assembled into the Lunar Society in and around Birmingham in the late 18th century. His son established himself in practice in Shrewsbury, and it was not until Charles himself that there is any connection with Cambridge.

I also wonder why he calls the founder of eugenics, Francis Galton, "a rather unpleasant man". Could it be because he is offended by Galton's whimsical definition of mediocrity as a "level of intellectual power to be found in most provincial gatherings"? Galton himself came from a distinguished Birmingham family of scientists and inventors.

Yours faithfully,
C. J. B. FLINT,
10 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham 2,
December 14.

dence adduced over a trial period spanning more than 110 days was essential in the client's interest.

Mr Rhodes's speech was not in any way pompous, long-winded or boring, which your article suggests some barristers can be. It was generally regarded as a tour de force. The judge did not seek to shorten it or to criticise its length. The jury was attentive and interested throughout, showed no sign of being bored, and in due course very properly found our client not guilty on all charges.

May I suggest that if we are forced down the road of being unnecessarily economical with clients' interests, the dangers of injustice and wrong convictions will be increased rather than reduced. Surely that is not the idea, is it?

Yours faithfully,
D. J. DUFFY (Partner),
Walker Morris (solicitors),
Kings Court, 12 King Street,
Leeds, West Yorkshire,
December 17.

Unlisted telephones

From Mr John Herrett

Sir, My telephone number has long been ex-directory. To be so has nothing to do with pretensions to being chic, as Libby Purves suggests ("Hang-ups of the great unlisted", December 13), much more to do with security and the reduction of nuisance. If one leaves a house empty whilst at work, it is slightly reassuring to know that the telephone number is not easily available to would-be intruders.

The nuisance factors include (anonymous) malicious calls, unsolicited calls from double-glazing salesmen and from those purporting to offer financial advice, and the use of the telephone directory as a source for junk-mail target addresses.

The nuisance of the calls is compounded if one has an answering machine: one is then obliged to listen to all the garbage amongst the welcome calls.

Any doubts I might have had about the wisdom of going ex-directory were removed recently when, due to an oversight on my part, my home number was re-listed. Most of the problems above immediately resurfaced. No, to be ex-directory is a wise policy, not a fashionable trend, and a nuisance to no one who is genuinely welcome as a caller: they will have the number from a previous introduction.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN G. HERRETT,
21 Derry Park, Minety,
Malmesbury, Wiltshire,
December 13.

From Dr Gerald Collins

Sir, Access to a telephone number should always be available to someone of responsibility at directory enquiries.

In cases of emergency, directory enquiries should telephone the subscriber and inform them who was trying to contact them. It would then be for them to decide any further action.

The privacy of these subscribers would still be protected, but the frustration would be removed for the genuine case when a subscriber might be urgently needed.

Of course this service would have to be paid for, I suggest by an additional charge on the person requesting it.

Yours etc.
GERALD COLLINS,
8-9 Queensbury Circle Parade,
Stammore, Middlesex,
December 13.

Cluttered clichés

From Mrs Richard Le Sueur

Sir, Your letters of December 6 and 13 remind me that many years ago I took and sent a memo from my boss at the Pergamon Press to his managing director, Robert Maxwell: "We have had many problems and there are still a few flies in the ointment, but I am sure that these will soon be ironed out."

Yours faithfully,
AILSA LE SUEUR,
11 Cours Saleya,
06000 Nice, France,
December 13.

With the postal delays that often occur at this time of year, it is useful, where possible, for letters to be faxed to 071-782 5046. Please give contact telephone numbers.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
December 19: Miss Betty Bush was received by The Queen when Her Majesty presented to her a Bar to the Royal Victorian Order (Silver).

YORK HOUSE
ST JAMES'S PALACE
December 18: The Duchess of

Kent, Patron, Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund, this evening read the lesson at a Carol Concert, Eton College Chapel, Windsor, Berkshire, and was met on arrival by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Berkshire (Mr John Henderson).
Mrs Fiona Henderson was in attendance.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr T.M. Biddow
and **Miss S.H. Garnett**
The engagement is announced between Mr T.M. Biddow, son of Mr M.K. Biddow, and Miss S.H. Garnett, daughter of Mr Harry and the Hon Mrs Garnett.

Mr A.R. Hambro
and **Miss H. Ward Jones**
The engagement is announced between Mr A.R. Hambro, son of Mr Charles Hambro, of Dinton Manor, and Miss H. Ward Jones, daughter of Mr and Mrs David Ward Jones, of London.

Mr P.J.G. Rushmore
and **Miss I.D. Chapman**
The engagement is announced between Mr P.J.G. Rushmore, son of Mr G.M.J. Rushmore, and Miss I.D. Chapman, daughter of Mr R.A. Chapman and the late Mr B. Chapman, London.

Mr J.P.L. Stables
and **Miss C.M. Campbell Brown**
The engagement is announced between Mr J.P.L. Stables, son of Mr and Mrs J.P.L. Stables, and Miss C.M. Campbell Brown, daughter of Mr and Mrs J.P.L. Stables, of Dairies House, Cupar, Fife.

Mr M.A. Walton
and **Miss M.E. Chetwynd**
The engagement is announced between Mr M.A. Walton, son of Mr and Mrs M.A. Walton, of Toothill, Romney, and Miss M.E. Chetwynd, daughter of Mr and Mrs R.G.H. Chetwynd, of Laphro, Devon.

Mr E.D. Theakston
and **Miss V.M. Chisenhale-Mars**
The engagement is announced between Mr E.D. Theakston, son of Mr and Mrs E.D. Theakston, of Swinton, Ripon, North Yorkshire, and Miss V.M. Chisenhale-Mars, daughter of Mr and Mrs V.M. Chisenhale-Mars, of Mickley, Ripon, North Yorkshire.

Mr J.A.P. Thompson
and **Miss K.L. Kozab**
The engagement is announced between Mr J.A.P. Thompson, son of Mr and Mrs J.A.P. Thompson, of Cobham, Surrey, and Miss K.L. Kozab, daughter of Mr and Mrs K.L. Kozab, of Radnor, Pennsylvania, USA.

Mr P.G. Willis
and **Miss D. Hribal**
The engagement is announced between Mr P.G. Willis, son of Mr and Mrs P.G. Willis, of West Hensley, Surrey, and Miss D. Hribal, daughter of Mr and Mrs D. Hribal, of Dairies House, Cupar, Fife.

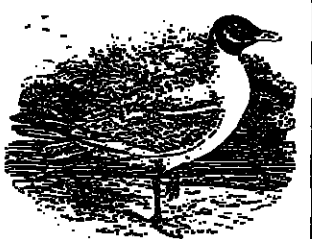
Mr A.C.H. Young
and **Miss S.J. Brooks**
The engagement is announced between Mr A.C.H. Young, son of Mr and Mrs A.C.H. Young, of Steep, Hampshire, and Miss S.J. Brooks, daughter of Mr and Mrs S.J. Brooks, of Sulhamstead, Berkshire.

Appointment

Professor John Arbuthnot, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Strathclyde University, has been appointed Chairman of the Joint Information Systems Committee.

Nature notes

IN STRONG winds, gulls are the birds most often seen in the sky. They learn to cope with winds and exploit them when they are hunting along cliffs and out at sea. There are now many black-headed gulls inland, some of them winter visitors from eastern Europe: they sit on a roof or a goalpost all facing into the gusts so that their feathers are not ruffled.



The black-headed gull

tops of many trees, especially apples and poplars: they are parasitic plants and sometimes kill their hosts. The ripe berries are like green-tinted pearls, and are poisonous, though bitter and untempting.

DJM

□ The New Times Nature Diary by Derwent May is based on a year of DJM's Nature Notes, illustrated by Richard Blake (Robinson Books, £10.95).



Nicholas Williams, son of the late Owain Williams and of Mrs Betty Williams of Emsworth, Hampshire, and Alexandra Heseltine, daughter of Michael Heseltine, MP, President of the Board of Trade, and Mrs Heseltine, were married on Saturday at St Lawrence's, Marston St Lawrence, Northamptonshire

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: John Wilson Croker, politician and writer, Galway, 1780; Thomas Graham, chemist, Glasgow, 1825; Sir Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, 1909-41 and 1949-66; Jagor, Victoria, 1894; George, Duke of Kent, Sandringham House, Norfolk, 1902.

DEATHS: Ambrose Paré, surgeon, Paris, 1590; Erich von Luder, German World War I general, Munich, 1971; James Hill, novelist, Long Beach, California, 1954; John Steinbeck, novelist, Nobel laureate 1962, New York, 1968; Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, Prime Minister of Spain 1973, assassinated, Madrid, 1973; Bobby Darin, singer, songwriter and actor, Hollywood, 1973; Aron Rubinstein, pianist, Geneva, 1982.

Birthdays today

Mr Bill Abbott, governor, Pentonville Prison, 52; Miss Jenny Agutter, actress, 41; Mr Michael Beaumont, Seigneur of Sark, 66; Lord Brabazon of Tara, 47; Mr Billy Bragg, singer, 35; Mr Simon Channing, chairman, London Philharmonic, 53; Mr Malcolm Cooper, marksman, 46; Mr Peter Cundell, racehorse trainer, 45; Mr Charles Denton, television and film producer, 56; Mr D.F. Gardner, chairman, Brighton Estate, 50; the Earl of Harrowby, 71; Lord Howe of Aberavon, QC, 67; Miss Rachel Trickett, former priest, 67; Sir Hugh's College, Oxford, 70; Mr John Whitney, chairman, Really Useful Group, 63; Mr John Wilkins, editor, *The Tablet*, 57.

Today's royal engagements

The Prince of Wales, as President of The Prince's Youth Business Trust, will attend a trade fair of North London businesses supported by the trust and will open the Pentland Group's new conference centre at the centre, Squires Lane, Finchley, at 11.30.

Horticulture

Seasonal splendours brighten RHS show

By ALAN TOOGOOD, HORTICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE first Royal Horticultural Society Christmas Flower Show provides an opportunity to do Christmas shopping and enjoy exhibits of seasonal plants.

The show, which opened in Westminster on Friday, is strong on horticultural sundries, which range from ornamental plant pots to dried flower arrangements, botanical prints and paintings.

Among the exhibits of plants, Westfield Cacti of Kennford, Devon, show a collection of Christmas and Crab cacti (Schlumbergera) in a surprisingly wide range of flower colours, from the ubiquitous magenta to orange, pink and red shades. One of the most popular pot plants at Christmas time is the poinsettia, with showy scarlet bracts. A collection of named cultivars has been staged by Potash Nursery of Cow Green, Suffolk, including their best seller, "Lilo" with very deep green foliage. Another excellent cultivar is "Vinterstar".

For those looking for something different there is "Marabel", with cream and pink bracts, and "Pink Dorothea".

Dried flowers are being shown by Stourton House Garden of Stourton, Wiltshire, and include hydrangeas in which they specialise, plus mixed bouquets of flowers and there are festive flower arrangements from the RHS Floral Arrangement Committee.

There is also a welcome touch of spring at this show: a display of tulips, narcissus and other bulbs from Jacques Amand of Stammore, west London; Camellias from Coghurst Nursery of Hastings, East Sussex; and Hellebores or Lenten Roses rubbing shoulders with miniature narcissus, from Avon Bulbs of Mid Lambrook, Somerset. The show was in the new Horticultural Hall, Greycoat Street, Westminster.

School news

Mr Nigel Richardson, 45, deputy headmaster of The King's School, Macclesfield, Cheshire, has been appointed headmaster of The Perse School, Cambridge. Mr Richardson, a graduate of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, is author of several school textbooks. His wife Joy, a primary school inspector, has written more than 50 books for children.

Mr Richardson takes over next September from Dr Martin Stephen who has been appointed High Master of Manchester Grammar School.

TRADE: 071 481 1982
PRIVATE: 071 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

FAX: 071 481 9312
FAX: 071 782 7821

The Lord has imparted knowledge to mortals, that by their use of his medicine he may win praise.
Ecclesiastes 38: 4 (RSCV)

BIRTHS

BETLEY - On November 2nd, to Lucy (née) and James, a son, George Francis.
HARDINGHAM - On December 14th, to Susan (née) and Michael (née) Hardingham, a son, Luke Charles.
MORE - 14th December 1993, in Brighthelm to Linda and Peter, a son, Lachlan McDougall, a brother for Hunter.

SKILL - On 4th December, to Susan (née) and Michael (née) Skill, a son, William Alexander.
TOFT CHRISTENSEN - On Monday 13th December, at Bath Royal United Hospital, to Janet and Christopher, a son, Joseph and Charlotte, a son, Harry, a brother to Victoria.

DEATHS

BAGGALL - On December 16th at Stamford Hospital, Charles Frederick Baggage, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

BRENNETT - Daisy Edith (Dorothy) née Mee, born 20th November 1929, passed away 11th December 1993. Beloved wife of John, mother of Philip, mother of Margaret and Ian. Now at rest and remains forever in our thoughts.

BETLEY - On November 17th, peacefully at Heathcote, Weymouth, Dorset, Betty, 73, M.D., F.R.C.P., daughter of Mr and Mrs J. Betley, of 23rd December. Details from Joe Betley & Son, Chichester, telephone 0962 644044.

CURRIE - On 16th December 1993, peacefully at home, Doris May (Doris) née Currie, 88, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. She was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

DEAN - On 16th December 1993, peacefully at home, John Dean, 88, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

FRITCHARD - On December 16th 1993 at The Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, aged 87 years, daughter of the late Mr and Mrs Fritchard, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. She was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

FRITCHARD - On December 16th 1993 at The Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, aged 87 years, daughter of the late Mr and Mrs Fritchard, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. She was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

FRITCHARD - On December 16th 1993 at The Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, aged 87 years, daughter of the late Mr and Mrs Fritchard, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. She was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

FRITCHARD - On December 16th 1993 at The Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, aged 87 years, daughter of the late Mr and Mrs Fritchard, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. She was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

DEATHS

STILLER - On December 15th, peacefully at home, George Stiller, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

HEXLEY - On December 16th in his 82nd year, at home, George Hexley, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

JACKSON - On December 16th, peacefully at home, John Jackson, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

WALLACE - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Wallace, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

DEATHS

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

READ - On December 17th, peacefully at home, John Read, 82, of 1100, 11th Avenue, New York, New York, USA. He was a member of the New York City Police Department and a member of the New York City Fire Department.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COURT AND SOCIAL PAGE

Over the Christmas period the following deadlines will apply:

Notices to appear on Friday 24th December should be received in writing by 5 pm 22nd December.

Notices for:

Monday 27th December

Tuesday 28th December

Wednesday 29th December

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COURT AND SOCIAL PAGE

Over the Christmas period the following deadlines will apply:

Notices to appear on Friday 24th December should be received in writing by 5 pm 22nd December.

Notices for:

Monday 27th December

Tuesday 28th December

Wednesday 29th December

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

FAX: 071 481 9313

should be received in writing by 10 am on 23rd December.

TEL: 071 782 7347

NEWS

Reynolds IRA hint upsets No 10

■ Albert Reynolds embarrassed the British Government by suggesting that it was ready to consider the future of hundreds of IRA prisoners held in British and Irish jails. The Irish Prime Minister warned of a fierce new security offensive if the IRA rejected the call for peace.

As Ulster continued to await a full response from the men of violence, the fragility of the peace process was underlined. The IRA set off a big bomb in Londonderry. Pages 1, 2

Operation Angel held up by police

■ For almost two hours yesterday, Sally Becker sat in the headquarters of the civilian police in Eastern Mostar, effectively held hostage by the people she had come to save. She had not been told that there was a 24-hour notice requirement before she could enter the stricken city. Pages 1, 8

White forecast

Much of Britain may have a white Christmas, weather forecasters predicted, as storms brought flooding to parts of the country. Page 1

Troops out plan

Contingency plans for an eventual phased withdrawal of the majority of troops from Northern Ireland have been drawn up by a special Cabinet working group chaired by Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland secretary. Page 2

GCHQ talks

John Major today will hold talks with the head of the GCHQ spy centre, raising the possibility of the restoration of union recognition. Page 2

Drug report

High-income earners from the upper and middle classes are the biggest users of illegal drugs in Britain today, according to the most detailed survey of drug usage yet undertaken for the Government. Page 3

Burglar killed

A burglar in Newcastle upon Tyne who had been chased by an irate householder, was killed when he tried to cross a busy road, not realising that his pursuer had given up. Page 3

Negligence delays

A senior NHS consultant has criticised the delays in dealing with medical negligence cases, which in one case took 11 years to resolve. Page 7

Kitchen door picture 'worth £23,000'

■ An old master drawing found pinned on a kitchen door in a Birmingham council house is expected to sell for up to £23,000 at a New York auction. It is a previously unknown work by Carlo Maratta, a 17th century Italian baroque artist. The owner, an elderly man who does not have a bank account, said the picture was bought by his father 50 years ago. Page 5

Shopping spree

Shoppers are spending 10-20 per cent more in the run-up to Christmas than last year according to retailers. Page 3

Russian pact

Russia's reformers, still reeling from their poor performance in the country's first parliamentary elections a week ago, launched an anti-Pastor front. Page 9

Basic mistake

The Government's Back to Basics programme rests on a false assumption that the British live by a code derived from the Ealing Comedies. Larry Siedentop, lecturer in politics at Keele, Oxford, says in *The Times* essay. Page 4

Talks deadlock

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators apparently failed to resolve the outstanding problems that have deadlocked their peace agreement, at two rounds of talks in Oslo. Page 11

Tiger threatened

India's Project Tiger, which saved the animal from extinction in the wild, is being accused of inflating estimates of the big cat population and concealing renewed threats to its survival. Page 10

Election struggle

Strenuous behind-the-scenes efforts are being made by the South African government to persuade the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party to contest April's election and break away from its right-wing allies. Page 10



An Israeli soldier is confronted by Palestinian women asking that he release a boy held for throwing stones in Gaza city. Page 11

BUSINESS

TV battle: Granada directors are attacked for having little television experience in the defence document published by London Weekend Television, which is resisting a £620 million bid. Page 36

Cheaper oil: The price of oil could fall to below \$10 a barrel according to analysts of the International Petroleum Exchange. The price will rise only when the West comes out of recession. Page 34

Jobs optimism: Employers are more optimistic about jobs. Manpower, the employment agency, says that the margin between companies expecting to lay off staff and those expecting to take on new people has narrowed. Page 33

SPORT

Football: Manchester United stayed on course for the Premiership title with a 3-1 home victory over Aston Villa, last season's runners-up. They are now 13 points ahead of Leeds. Page 19

Golf: Larry Mize shot a six-under-par 65 to win the Johnnie Walker World Championship in Jamaica. His score of 266, 18 under par, left him ten shots ahead of Fred Couples, with Bernhard Langer third on 277. Page 19

Ice skating: Katarina Witt finished second at the German championships to keep alive her hopes of a return to Olympic competition in the new year. Simon Barnes reports. Page 26

FEATURES

Blessed role: Being tentatively asked whether you'd consider becoming a godparent is the warmest compliment short of a marriage proposal. Nicholas Coleridge on the duties, and costs, of the godparent. Page 12

Dark attraction: Regardless of the price tag it may bear, there can be little in a woman's wardrobe more valuable than a simple black dress. Says Iain R. Webb. Page 13

Boy, am I happy: Girls' schools are unequivocally for girls and are 100 per cent geared to looking after them. Hilary Fender on why girls like girls' schools. Page 28

ARTS

Long may it reign: Phyllida Lloyd's production of *Gloriana* for Opera North is a triumph which proves beyond any doubt that Benjamin Britten's coronation opera is a great work. Page 29

Battle of the broadcasters: After a contest between radio and television lasting almost five hours, which was broadcast on BBC2 and Radio 4 on Saturday night, it became clear that radio definitely has the better pictures. Page 29

Boy is back: Boy George may have been celebrated for his ability to wear a dress, but when it comes to playing live he can still turn it on, as his concert at the Hammersmith Apollo showed. Page 30

TV LISTINGS

An unflattering centenary portrait of Mao Tse-Tung reveals him as a tyrant and compulsive womaniser. *Timewatch* (BBC2, 9.30pm) Page 35

OPINION

Christmas cheer

Whether the recovery is strong enough to withstand the knocks of next April's tax increases is the question Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, should be pondering over his mince pies. Page 15

Time for a statesman

Mr Arafat should prepare for accountable government, or reconsider his position as "president" of a Palestine *maquis*. Page 15

Jules and Kevin

Was it really to protect the French film industry that President Mitterrand's government took the world to the brink of a trade war, or was it that the chattering classes could not bear to hear of another girl named Sue-Ellen? Page 15

COLUMNS

WILLIAM REES-MOGG

What would Hitler have made of it all? He has been compared to Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in almost every newspaper in the world. Would he have been pleased that nationalism, anti-Semitism and aggression, have again been brought into public discussion? Or would he have rejected Mr Zhirinovskiy as an imposter? Page 14

PETER RIDDELL

Tory MPs are becoming over-confident. They have left the Commons smiling, talking of "turning points" and the like. But the mood at Westminster is not the same as opinion in the country. The Tories' troubles are far from over. Page 14

MATTHEW PARRIS

Beside me on my desk lies a copy of the European Parliament's draft report, DOC EN/PR/23233, from the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology. *On The Proposal To Set Up A European Centre For Sightings Of Unidentified Flying Objects*. What can you say? Surely it's a spoof? Page 14

LETTERS

Conflicting views on value of local government reform. Page 15

THE TIMES TOMORROW

Lockergie compensation delay

■ Five years ago tomorrow, Pan Am's flight 103 crashed at Lockerbie. Nigel Taylor asks why the victims' families have yet to receive compensation

Recognising the impossible

■ "I have always kept in mind the precept that warns against trying to do things which are manifestly beyond our powers." Bernard Levin on high finance

Suspect momentum

■ Lynda La Plante and Helen Mirren have teamed up again for *Prime Suspect 3*. But can they really maintain the momentum?



The Bishop of Durham who shocked Christians by saying that the star of Bethlehem and the gifts of the Three Wise Men were myths. Page 1

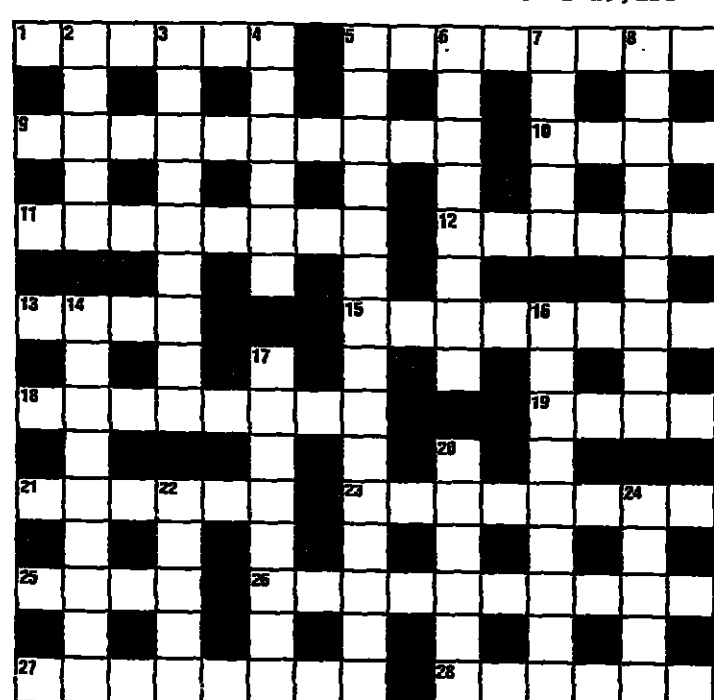


Melanie Douglas, 22, who gave birth to a girl while she was in a coma, is now well enough to cuddle the baby she did not know she was expecting. Page 3



Dr Sheila Lawlor, deputy director of the Centre for Policy Studies, says that new plans for the national curriculum do not go far enough. Page 5

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 19,418



- ACROSS
- Handle crew Silver assembled before start of expedition (6).
 - It's party time, note - throw off all restraint (8).
 - Pays cashiers (10).
 - Underworld boss collecting money from pickpockets (4).
 - Recalling gift in split wrapping (8).
 - Performing operations to remove veins, perhaps? (6).
 - Teacher's tuner longing (4).
 - At home in sheltered and comfortable position (5).
 - List score lines for court official (8).
 - Plant covering new arch (4).
 - Sign giving information to one circling motorway (6).
 - Sole in a saucy case provided as a starter (8).
- DOWN
- It is said to impart confidence in the theatre (5).
 - A solitary retainer on an eastern vessel (9).
 - Told off Head - and very pleased about it (6).
 - Short of weight fighter has a late build-up (5,2,1,7).
 - Disreputable fellows in low area adjoining the East End (8).
 - Sculptor of boy embracing girl (5).
 - Transfer pad in turn for this kind of cricket (3,3,3).
 - Could be 7, the cheat (9).
 - Conveyance in port secured by chain? Exactly! (9).
 - Reserved performance includes re-written Act 1 (8).
 - In flight slip under sheet at last (6).
 - First-class climbing requiring doctors for the feet (5).
 - Unskilful writer is sent up in it (5).

KNOCKANDU

The solution of Saturday's Prize Puzzle No 19,417 will appear next Friday. The five winners will receive a bottle of Knockando, a superb Speyside Single Malt Scotch whisky and a stationery rack.

Times Two Crossword, page 36

TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0891 600 followed by the appropriate code.

Greater London	701
East of London	702
West of London	703
Devon & Cornwall	704
Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset	705
Berkshire, Bucks, Oxon	706
Bedfordshire & Essex	707
Northampton, Cambs	708
West Mid & Sh. Glam & Gwent	709
Stroud, Hereford & Worcester	710
Central Midlands	711
East Midlands	712
Lincoln & Humberside	713
Derby & Leics	714
W. Yorks & C. Yorks	715
N. Yorks & Dales	716
N. England	717
Cumbria & Lake District	718
S.W. Scotland	719
W. Central Scotland	720
Edin & Fife, Lothian & Borders	721
E. Central Scotland	722
Highland	723
Grampian & E. Highlands	724
N.W. Scotland	725
Colchester, Essex & Shetland	726
N. Ireland	727

Weathercall is charged at 36p per minute (cheap rate) and 48p per minute at all other times.

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the appropriate code.

London & SE traffic, roadworks	731
East of London	732
West of London	733
Devon & Cornwall	734
Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset	735
Berkshire, Bucks, Oxon	736
Bedfordshire & Essex	737
Northampton, Cambs	738
West Mid & Sh. Glam & Gwent	739
Stroud, Hereford & Worcester	740
Central Midlands	741
East Midlands	742
Lincoln & Humberside	743
Derby & Leics	744
W. Yorks & C. Yorks	745
N. Yorks & Dales	746
N. England	747
Cumbria & Lake District	748
S.W. Scotland	749
W. Central Scotland	750
Edin & Fife, Lothian & Borders	751
E. Central Scotland	752
Highland	753
Grampian & E. Highlands	754
N.W. Scotland	755
Colchester, Essex & Shetland	756
N. Ireland	757

AA Roadwatch is charged at 36p per minute (cheap rate) and 48p per minute at all other times.

WEATHER

A bright, cold and frosty start in northern and eastern areas, with snow showers in northwest Scotland. Southwest Britain wet in the morning. Rain will spread to all of England, Wales and Northern Ireland during the day, reaching southern Scotland in the evening and turning to snow in northern areas later. Southwest areas clearer and milder later, with showers. Outlook: rather cold and showery, then rain. Snow in northern areas.

AROUND SCOTLAND

MIDWAY: 10- thunder, 6- drizzle; 10- fog, 5- 3- drizzle, 5- thunder, 1- fair, 6- drizzle 10- 5-				
	C	W	C	W
Alcatraz	11	58	5	5
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16
Alcatraz	21	70	5	16



ARTS 29-30

Josephine Barstow triumphs as the Virgin Queen



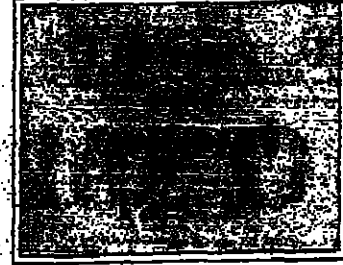
EDUCATION 28

Tuition fee cuts: storing up trouble for the future



BUSINESS 32-36

Falling oil price fails to respond to Opec threats



THE TIMES

2

MONDAY DECEMBER 20 1993

Football legend's hopes dashed

Row over Pelé sours draw for World Cup

FROM ROB HUGHES, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT, IN LAS VEGAS

THE American entry into the world game of football began in sorrowful disarray here before the draw for the 1994 World Cup could even begin last night. Pelé, the greatest living footballer and the one man most Americans will admit they would recognise in soccer kit, said that his hopes of being part of the ceremony had been dashed.

His own countryman, Dr João Havelange, the Brazilian who has ruled Fifa as president for 20 years, had already implied that he would not have Pelé on stage in the auditorium because Pelé was in litigation with the Brazilian Football Federation. The president of that federation is Ricardo Teixeira, who is Havelange's son-in-law. Teixeira is suing Pelé for claiming in the November issue of *Playboy* that the Brazilian federation acted corruptly in turning down his bid of \$5 million to buy the television rights for the Brazilian championship, and accepting a lesser bid.

That trial continues but the trials for the international sport also continued apace here. First Havelange sat before the media, a figure almost cast in stone, his mouth moving but very little else emerging by way of either emotion or sentiment.

Speaking in French, Havelange was asked four times whether Pelé would be allowed to take part in the draw. He stonewalled. Never once did he bring himself to mention the name Pelé.

"Fifa is an institution, and the World Cup belongs to it," the septuagenarian president said. "It is up to Fifa to make the choice of who is invited. There is no obligation. It is something reserved totally to the members of Fifa."

Pressed, Havelange repeated that it was "unimportant which people were invited". He said that the decision had been taken by the US 94 organising committee and by the Fifa Executive Committee.

This was later contradicted by members of the Fifa Executive who privately revealed that Havelange had refused all discussion, all mention of the name Pelé at their meeting.

The presence or absence of one player changes in no way anything, and Fifa has the absolute right to decide," Havelange reassured. And told that Alan Rothenberg, the chairman and chief executive of the American organising body, would be very disappointed if Pelé were absent, Havelange retorted: "Mr Rothenberg will be very disappointed if we withdrew the World Cup. He has the World Cup, it is not that a decision on one person is going to change

Andreas Möller scored one goal and set up two others as Germany beat a youthful United States team 3-0 at Stanford, California, on Saturday. Möller scored with a first-half header, but the American team proved surprisingly resilient until the late in the second half, when they allowed Kuntz and Thon, the substitute, goals in the last two minutes.

anything," Havelange is wrong. According to a Harris Poll 13 per cent of Americans are aware of the World Cup in their country. That represents 30 million people, and they and a world audience expected to reach between 600 million and one billion when the draw is finally shown in its recorded versions to nations which did not take it live surely makes the World Cup draw ceremony the property not of an exclusive committee but of the world. Fifa, after all, banks million upon million of dollars from sponsors and television based on this popularity.

So, to the central figure to whom Havelange denies acknowledgement, Pelé, who from the moment his genius was sprung on the world as a 17-year-old goal-scorer in the

1958 World Cup in Sweden, is now the chief spokesperson for MasterCard, held his own press conference after that breakfast yesterday. "In 1975 when I came to play for the New York Cosmos, I said that my dream was for a World Cup here in America," began Pelé. "Pelé, you are crazy, everybody told me... well, here we are."

You would have had to be in the room to appreciate the warmth and emotion of the standing ovation from 1,500 journalists. They hushed again when Pelé continued: "This moment was very important for me. I have nothing against Havelange or Fifa. Havelange is my idol since 1958, he encouraged me a lot. But, he is the boss of Fifa, he says who can come to the draw, and I have to accept it if he says Pelé cannot be an official part. But I am part of the Fifa family, and I am going to be in the audience."

That audience numbered 3,500 people, from dignitaries to hangers-on and Pelé, three hours before joining them, had detailed his problems with the Brazilian federation and with the son-in-law of Havelange. "I am Brazilian, I have stood for 35 years for one thing, that I don't accept corruption. That is the reason for my fight, the reason I cannot be with you in the room where the draw is made."

Finally he embraced Bobby Charlton, who had stood at the back of the stage where he gave his press conference. And Pelé asked one thing, typical of the man. "Everybody knows me," he said. "I have my life, and it doesn't change."

"What will happen a few hours from now will hurt my feelings, but I really hope that it is the beginning of my dream, the beginning for a wonderful World Cup and for America to become a recognised part of my game." He triggered with that statement the thought of his youth, the title of his autobiography: *Pelé: The Beautiful Game*.

□ The United States will launch a 12-team professional league in the spring of 1995. Alan Rothenberg said yesterday. The league will run from April to September, although cities and stadiums have still to be selected.

Rothenberg presented a business plan for the league to Fifa and was given their permission to go ahead. Fifa stipulated when the United States was awarded the World Cup that the professional league should be set up.



Kanchelskis, the Manchester United winger, is subject of the attentions of three Aston Villa defenders at Old Trafford yesterday

Cantona takes United to new heights

Manchester United..... 3
Aston Villa..... 1

BY PETER BALL

MANCHESTER United were magnificent yesterday. With Eric Cantona rampant in a side playing football with passion to match their skill, they destroyed Aston Villa and increased their lead at the top of the FA Carling Premiership to 13 points.

With exactly half the programme gone, Manchester United have amassed 52 points. "That is better than you could hope for," their manager, Alex Ferguson, said afterwards. "I thought the team would develop once they had won the League, but the side's stature and the presence that certain players have now is even greater than I expected."

With such a lead at Christmas, the question increasingly is not can anyone catch them, but what their winning margin will be and whether they will set a points record. "The only way anyone will catch them is if the rest get six points for a win and they don't get any," Ron Atkinson, the Villa manager, said.

Blackburn Rovers, United's next visitors to Old Trafford, on Boxing Day, and Leeds United, who come on New Year's Day, may have other ideas. But unless those two teams can halt United, it is hard to see who will end their unbeaten home run, which stretches back 13 months.

It was beyond Villa, United's closest challengers last season. Yesterday they arrived at Old Trafford with all the confidence of a team with only one away defeat all season, and clearly fired up for the task. But United were equal to the challenge and for the first 45 minutes their performance was awe-inspiring.

"Everyone was in such sparkling form in that first half that you couldn't say anyone stood out," Cantona said. "It was the team that sparkled. This is the best team I've played for." Cantona was no modest. Even in such good company, he stood out, scoring the first two goals and orchestrating United's attacks with wit and precision.

"Eric was magnificent, unbelievable," Ferguson said. "Ron Atkinson has always played 4-4-2, but he changed all his principles to man-mark

Eric Cantona, and you can't get a greater accolade than that."

Poor Earl Barrett, the man who drew the short straw, could do little but follow helplessly as Cantona went wandering. When it mattered, he was in the penalty area. His first attempt on goal, a soaring header, came out off the post, but his next intervention was justly rewarded.

Parker released Keane with a perfect chip which the Irishman chested past Atkinson, driving the ball low across the goalmouth. Barrett and Teale missed it and Cantona arrived at the far post to send United in at the interval with a one-goal lead, a poor reward for a sensational display.

It was to Villa's credit that in the second half they succeeded in making a match of it as United went off the boil. With the admirable Richardson driving forward passionately, they even hinted that they might snatch an unlikely point.

But with the arrival of Giggs, United had the last word. Twice the Welshman might have made the game safe in swift counterattacks before Cantona finally did so.

breaking on to Bruce's through-ball, evading McGrath's desperate tackle and beating Bosnich.

Forty seconds later United were three up as Hughes bustled past Teale and provided once with fitting reward for another dominant midfield display. Cox's late goal was scant consolation for Villa, who trail United by 21 points.

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-3-3): P. Schuster — P. Parker, S. Bruce, G. Patterson, D. Irwin — P. Irwin, R. Keane — A. Manchester, E. Cantona, M. Hughes, S. Parker (sub: S. Gibson, R. Smith).

ASTON VILLA (4-4-2): M. Bosnich — N. Cox, P. McGrath, S. Teale, S. Small — E. Barrett — G. Parker, K. Richardson — D. Atkinson — D. Saunders (sub: A. Dooly, G. G. Whitham).

Referee: J. Wootton.

McAllister's lead, page 28

Brady faces up, page 25



Havelange reticent



Pelé unwelcome

Magnificent Mize wins world championship

FROM JOHN HOPKINS GOLF CORRESPONDENT IN MONTGOMERY

LARRY Mize played one of his best rounds to win the world championship at the Tryall Club here in Jamaica yesterday. Mize, the 1987 United States Masters champion, ran away from the 28-man field and went round the par-71 course in 65, his lowest round of the week, to finish at 18-under par to win by ten strokes.

Mize was invited to appear in the Johnnie Walker-sponsored tournament only when Greg Norman withdrew. His acceptance and subsequent efforts earned him \$394,127, by far his biggest pay day.

Colin Montgomerie had trailed Mize by only three strokes after 54 holes and although it has been a wonderful year for the Scot, who finished No 1 in Europe, he could not produce a wonderful conclusion to it yesterday. He had a nightmare round, recording a 74. "It was my worst

five-over-par 40 he took to reach the turn. "It's just a shame it had to come at a time like this."

Montgomerie could do little right after he three-putted the 3rd, where there was a two-stroke swing in Mize's favour. There was another two-stroke swing on the next, when he missed a putt of less than two feet to record a bogey and Mize birdied his second hole in succession. The consolation for Montgomerie was that he won \$87,245.

It was left to Bernhard Langer, of Germany, to move into third place, with a 69, and to Fred Couples to take second place. The 1992 US Masters champion had nine birdies and a double-bogey seven in a thrilling round of 64, the best of the week.

It was at the country club at Brookline, outside Boston, in 1988 that Curtis Strange overcame Nick Faldo in a play-off for the United States Open. A

year later, Strange successfully defended his title. Thereafter, he fell into steep decline.

For Faldo, however, the defeat at Brookline was the start of a run of form that brought him two US Masters titles and two Open Championships.

Strange gained entry to this tournament by winning the last qualifying event, Greg Norman's Holden Classic in Australia — and showing a welcome return to form. He finished at five under par here. "I played all right," Strange, who is now 38, said. "I'm not jumping up and down splitting

wooden nickels but I'm getting there."

Once again, Faldo showed flashes of form. He can play well for half a round but not, seemingly, for all 18 holes. He had a wretched outward half of 39 before coming home in 31.

Before he had worked out what was wrong, he was prone to practising his swing using only one hand — his right. He taught himself a lot, declined to wear anything on his head as protection against the sun and sprinkled powder on his hands every few holes to grip the club better.

He ended an unsuccessful defence of his title with two birdies and an aggregate total of 281, three under par and a share of sixth place.

In the Million Dollar Challenge in southern Africa two weeks ago, Ian Woosnam finished 21 over par, 45 strokes behind the winner, Nick Price. It was a salutary experience for the little Welshman, who promptly went and spent time in Florida with David Leadbetter, the golf coach, before coming to Jamaica.

There was a slight improvement as a result. At Tryall, Woosnam finished eight over par, a mere 26 strokes behind Mize.

Woosnam passed the mantle of last man home to Peter Baker, his Ryder Cup partner, whose rounds of 74, 76, 79 and 76 totalled 29 over par. It was the sort of performance that did no good to Baker's reputation as one of the most promising young players in the world.

Yet his cheery grin was still

a feature of the week, although it might have been better for him if someone had wiped it off his face.

Mize is leaner in both body and face than he was when he flukily chipped into the hole from 40 yards at the second play-off hole to win at Augusta six years ago. But as he gets older and lighter, he seems to be playing better.

After working with David Leadbetter, he has acquired greater control of the ball and he is certainly longer now than he used to be. He captured two tournaments in the United States this year — the first time he has done so — and only narrowly missed winning a place in the American Ryder Cup team.

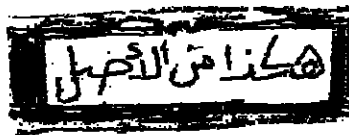
"This has got to be one of the best rounds I have ever played," he said. "I think the other guys will kill me if I don't say that. I felt the best all right and I had butterflies last night and before I played. But, hopefully, they are flying in formation now."



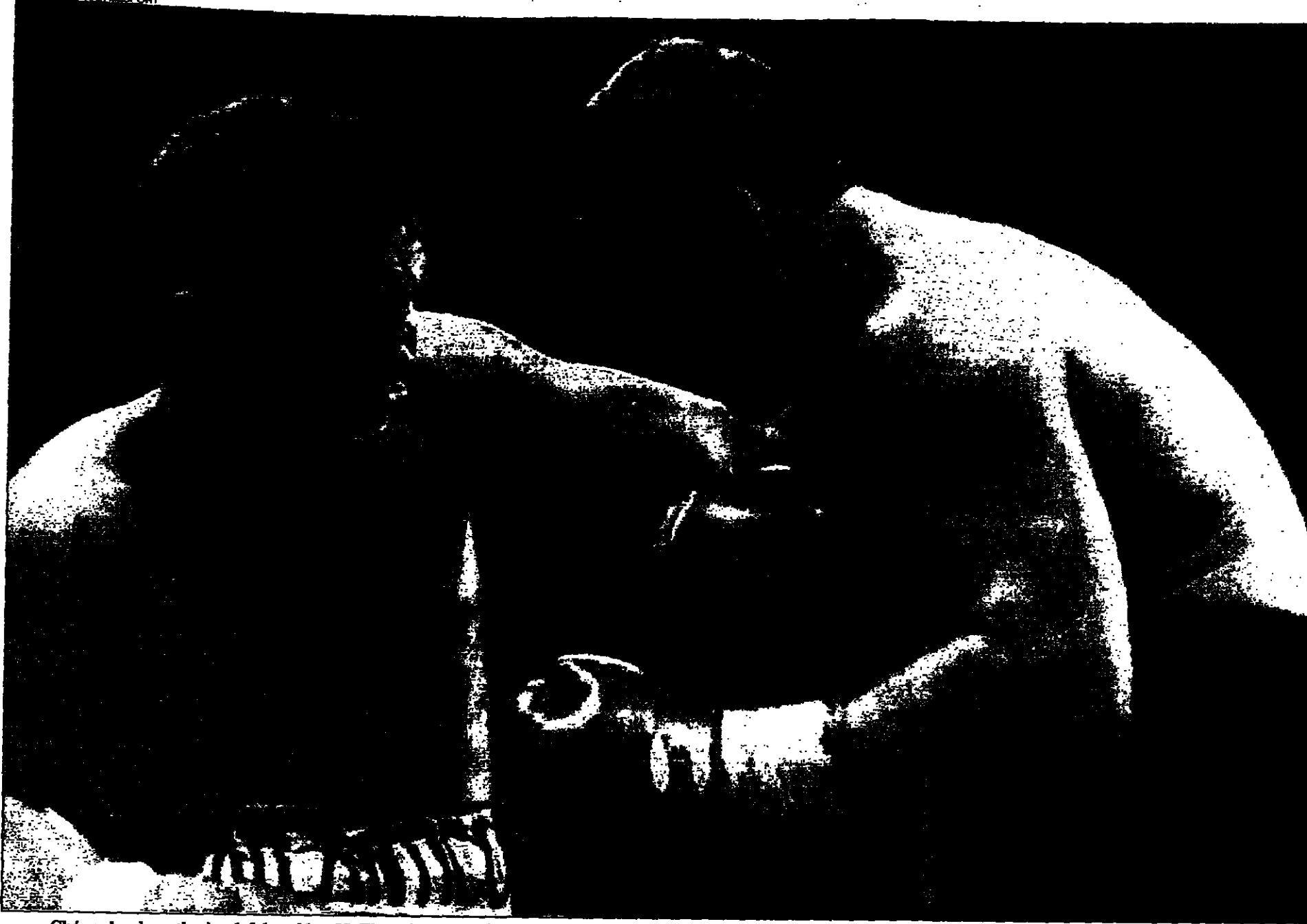
INTRODUCE SOME CALIFORNIAN INTO THE CONVERSATION

E&J

SINGLE CASK MATURED BRANDY



David Henderson/ALL SPORT



Chávez lands a stinging left hand but Holligan keeps coming forward in his unsuccessful but spirited challenge for the world champion's titles in Puebla, Mexico

Sensitive referee saves Holligan

When Andy Holligan can bring himself to watch the video of his world light-welterweight title challenge against Julio César Chávez, at Cuauhtémoc Stadium, in Puebla, Mexico, on Saturday, he will thank Arthur Mercante, the referee, for saving him from being seriously injured.

No boxer likes to be prevented from carrying on, but Holligan will see that Mercante's decision to question the advisability of his continuing was a good one.

Mercante realised that Holligan was not going to be knocked down or disposed of easily and so, fearing him to be in danger of getting a systematic beating from Chávez, made his fears known to the British corner as diplomatically as possible and Holligan's trainer, Colin Moorcroft, decided to retire the challenger on his stool, his challenge for the World Boxing Council and World Boxing Association titles, over.

Mercante, having watched Holligan stumbling deeper and deeper into trouble as the bout progressed, went over to the Englishman's corner and told Chuck Bodak, his American cut man: "This can't go on. He's taking too much of a

beating." Bodak agreed: "Yeah, I agree with you. It's like being behind a country mile. What's the point of going on?" When Moorcroft realised that Holligan's nose had been severely damaged and he could not breathe and was swallowing blood, he decided to take Mercante's advice.

It was just as well Mercante was in charge, for he is the WBC's most experienced referee, with 109 world title bouts. Another referee might not have nudged Holligan's corner into making a decision, and Holligan, who refused to bend before Chávez's blows, might have carried on into the later rounds and been seriously injured. Chávez can pull out a knockout punch even at the end of a bout as Meldrick Taylor found, waking up in a hospital some years ago.

Near the end of the fifth round, Holligan received a cluster of blows that sickened even Mercante. He could see that the two men were not in the same league. He said afterwards: "I could feel the power of those blows to the head. He was receiving an unusual amount of punishment around the head, thunderous blows. He'll feel those for a couple of days."

"I could see Julio was really



Srikumar Sen watches as brave Liverpoolian stages spirited attempt to become world champion

trying to knock him out and not succeeding. I thought Julio did not have enough power to knock him out and there was a danger of Holligan receiving a beating if I allowed him to continue. If he had come out for the sixth round, I would not have allowed the fight to go on beyond 60 seconds.

"He was a brave, valiant warrior and can take it, but these are the sort who can get into trouble in later rounds. My impression was that he was never in the fight and lost every round. I wanted to stop it in the fifth, but as it was close to the end of the round, I thought I would let it go and then go over to his corner."

Holligan, who said his nose had been damaged in training in Liverpool, and then in sparring in Mexico City, believed it had healed enough for him to go through with the bout. He admitted that his tactics had been all wrong. He had said before the bout that he would meet Chávez, the most complete boxer-fighter in the division, head on and he

did. They stood head to head and punched it out for long periods.

"I think what I did wrong was standing there in front of him when I should have come back out and not become a macho man," Holligan said. He had thought, being a natural light-welterweight, he would be able to stand up to the blows of Chávez, who was simply an overblown super-featherweight. But he found that the much-vaunted left hook was too much for him and in the first round it knocked the breath out of him and a right hand checked him in his stride.

"I've never been hit so hard to the body before," he said. From that moment Holligan was too busy shielding his ribs with his elbows to throw effective punches. A right up percut in the first round smashed the blood vessels inside his nose. No matter how furiously Bodak worked with coagulants, after the first blow from the Mexican in each succeeding round, the bleed-

ing always started up again. In the second and third rounds Holligan went after the champion. The Mexican, glad that an opponent had not decided to rely on quick hands and quicker legs, backed away and drew Holligan on to his punches.

While it was always feared that Holligan's strategy of punching it out with Chávez was the wrong one, it was surprising was that Holligan did not go down from the blows he received in the first three rounds. People were beginning to wonder if Holligan was about to prove everybody wrong.

The fourth round was clearly Holligan's. For the first time, he caught the champion with solid punches and had Chávez backing away and slowing down and, at times, looking quite ordinary. It was strange to see him once trying to throw a right off the wrong foot, the way tired boxers do.

Holligan carried out the good work in the first part of the fifth round, getting the better of the exchanges. Then as Holligan still pursued Chávez, the champion lifted the pace as smoothly as one of his many expensive cars can and

pulled away. A cluster of blows landed on Holligan's face from every angle. He was saved from taking any more by the bell.

From outside the ring, he did not seem to be in any more distress than one would expect a boxer to be in from time to time in a bout. But clearly Mercante had seen more and had decided to take the matter to Holligan's corner.

The Liverpoolian, or as Don King called him later, "The Liverpool" acquitted himself with pride and courage. It is a pity that he had just a week's notice to make up his mind about taking the contest. As a result, he was not able to prepare as much as would have been advisable.

Clearly he will never be able to beat the man who has always been his hero, but an easier version of the title could be within his reach. Chávez has 25 of the best cars money can buy. Each represents a world title bout. Now he will buy a Rolls Royce. There can be no higher tribute to an opponent he found "very strong, courageous and a gentleman".

Holligan will rest and return to the ring on the Nigel Benn-Henry Wharton bill at Earl's Court on February 26.

Richardson calls for end of pitch doctoring

RICHIE Richardson, the West Indies captain, yesterday called for the International Cricket Council to take more control over the game "especially in the all-important matters of selecting umpires and getting countries to give up making wickets to suit their bowlers".

Richardson was speaking in Colombo shortly before his team left for home, having beaten Sri Lanka by six wickets in rain affected one-day international on Saturday.

After Sri Lanka had made 103 for five in their 23 overs, West Indies got home with five balls to spare after an explosive innings from Keith Arthurton, who scored 25 from 19 balls.

SRI LANKA
R S Mahipala c Richardson b Walsh... 10
S Jayasinghe c Richardson b Walsh... 29
P A de Silva c Anderson b Simmons... 6
A Ranasinghe c Adams b Simmons... 7
R Kalpage not out... 27
R Kulkarni not out... 8
Extras (nb 1, w 5, b 5, lb 1)... 12
Total (5 wickets, 23 overs)... 103
D Samarasekera, D Jayasinghe, D Anura, P Wickramasinghe did not bat.
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-2-14, 3-25, 4-49, 5-82.
BOWLING: Ambrose 5-2-12-0; Walsh 5-0-24-3; Benemann 4-0-21-0; Cummins 4-0-15-0; Simmons 5-0-25-2.

WEST INDIES
D L Haynes c Jayasinghe b Anura... 23
B C Lara b Jayasinghe... 29
R B Richardson c Samarasekera b Jayasinghe... 2
C L Hooper run out... 16
P V Simmons not out... 15
K J Arthurton not out... 24
Extras (nb 1, lb 5, w 4)... 10
Total (4 wickets, 22.1 overs)... 107
A C Cummins, J C Adams, W R M Samaran, C E L Ambrose and C A Walsh did not bat.
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-42, 2-54, 3-68, 4-88.
BOWLING: Wickramasinghe 4-10-20-0; Laryage 3-1-16-0; Ambrose 5-0-17-1; Kalpage 5-0-21-0; Jayasinghe 5-0-25-2.

Croft let down by his fielders

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN PORT ELIZABETH

IF ENGLAND A had fielded half decently yesterday they would have won this match with more than a day to spare. They still will win it, but the errors that littered the afternoon, when seven chances were missed, will remind them that cricket was never meant to be an easy game.

In that respect it might be a blessing. They have dominated their opponents so convincingly on this tour, with bat and ball, that the honest resistance of Baptiste and Botha, who have so far added 101 for Eastern Province's fifth wicket, has not come a moment too soon.

At 185 for four, Eastern Province must score another 190 to make England bat again, which is unlikely if the resident pair are parted quickly this morning. Their first innings was a craven display from which one can exempt Grant Morgan, the wicket-keeper, who made a spirited

unbeaten 60 on his first-class debut. Cricketers have deputed for many reasons, but few as peculiar as Morgan's. Lulima Masikazana, who should have played, was being circumcised, a ritual rite of passage in these parts.

Croft took five for 41 in Eastern Province's calamitous first innings and he quickly claimed another when they followed on. Had the close fielders been more alert he might easily have run through the order again.

His disappointment was threefold. Before he was out, top-edging a ghastly sweep to square leg, Arun was missed by Crawley at slip. Botha was dropped before he had scored, by Lathwell at short leg, and on two by Wells at silly point.

Botha was spared again on 34 by Rhodes, who had earlier missed Arun. Neither chance was easy but he has taken similar catches in the past.

Morris, at short extra-cover, grassed Pope's prod and Crawley edged himself to mid-on, the outfielders' Gulag, after he failed to hold Baptiste's edge at slip.

Baptiste was seven at the time; he now has 58. Botha, after almost four hours tethered to the crease, reached his half-century from the last ball of the day. Watching him bat is rather like hearing P W Botha speak - it is strictly for initiates and the habit does not come easily.

McCaughy has got some useful practice here, though the slow pitch has given him no assistance. Cork has been the best of the quicker bowlers, taking three wickets in the first innings and two more yesterday before he conceded a run.

Life is never dull when Cork is bowling. Every time he beats the bat, or watches a desperate batsman jab the ball away before it beats his de-

fence, he throws up his hands like a pantomime dame who has just caught Cinderella in the broom cupboard with a footman.

Whatever happens today this match belongs to Crawley whose magnificent 286 is the highest score ever made on this ground - Hutton made 202 here for MCC in 1938 - and the sixth highest in the history of South African cricket.

The quality of bowling was not high, but neither could it have been at Benoni in 1948-49 when Compton made his famous 300 in three hours - one of the five higher innings than Crawley's.

In Crawley's defence it should be noted that the ball has not come on here, as strokemakers prefer, there are vagaries of bounce and it has turned. For a 22-year-old (albeit an older man in brain and demeanour) it was a prodigious achievement.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND A: First Innings	
M L Lathwell c Pope b Baptiste	5
H Morris c Huckle b Shaw	29
J P Crawley c and b Lyle	286
A P Wells c Lyle b Huckle	126
M B Lyle c and b Shaw	7
W J Rhodes not out	22
Extras (nb 1, w 11, lb 7, nb 1)	26
Total (5 wickets)	586
R O B Cork, D G Cook, M J McCaughy, C A Nor and P M Such did not bat.	
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-24, 2-177, 3-438, 4-473, 5-568	
Bowling: Lyle 26.4-101-1; Baptiste 25-7-80-1; Nor 25-3-94-0; Huckle 48-10-159-1; Shaw 28-4-156-2	
EASTERN PROVINCE: First Innings	
P G Arun c Crawley b Bat	20
M C Verter bow b Cork	31
A Botha not out	52
L J Koen c Rhodes b Cork	0
S Pope c Rhodes b McCaughy	31
E A E Baptiste not out	58
Extras (nb 5, w 2, nb 4)	11
Total (4 wickets)	186
C Morgan, T G Shaw, A Huckle, R Lyle and G Roe did not bat.	
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-34, 2-36, 3-66, 4-84	
Bowling: McCaughy 18-7-38-1; Nor 19-4-30-0; Cook 18-5-34-1; Cork 13-4-31-2; Such 15-3-41-0	
Umpires: R Kootzen and R Noble	

NEW ZEALAND	
B A Young bow b Matthews	74
R T Latham c Westwood b Matthews	7
* R Rutherford not out	9
M J Gresham not out	8
C L Cairns not out	30
S A Thompson c Matthews	25
T E Blair c Richardson b Matthews	5
G R Larsen not out	4
Extras (nb 1, w 1)	2
Total (5 wickets, 44.1 overs)	148
D N Piel, C Pingle and D K Morrison did not bat.	
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-22, 2-54, 3-86, 4-112, 5-122, 6-142	
BOWLING: Matthews 10-1-38-4; De Villiers 8-1-1-23-0; Seal 10-2-29-0; Symcox 10-0-25-0; Thornton 5-0-18-1; Cairns 7-0-27-1	

SOUTH AFRICA	
A C Hudson c Young b Pingle	8
G Venter c Young b Pingle	7
* C Wessels c Blair b Latham	15
W J Coenre c Morrison b Latham	16
D J Cullinan c Blair b Thomson	8
O J Collesse c Pingle	25
T J Richardson not out	38
P L Symcox c Blair b Cairns	8
R P Small not out	13
Extras (nb 4, w 3)	7
Total (7 wickets, 60 overs)	147
C R Matthews and F de Villiers did not bat.	
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-15, 2-22, 3-50, 4-53, 5-65, 6-101, 7-110	
BOWLING: Pingle 10-1-38-3; Morrison 8-1-32-0; Latham 10-5-12-2; Piel 10-2-25-0; Thornton 5-0-18-1; Cairns 7-0-27-1	



Crawley: fine display

Young puts error of judgment behind him

AFTER being responsible for the running out of Ken Rutherford, his captain, Brian Young, the opening batsman, scored 74 from 116 balls on Saturday to lead New Zealand to a four-wicket victory over South Africa in a World Series Cup match at Hobart.

South Africa were limited to 147 for seven in their 50 overs.

Young, who was 100 not out in the first innings, was 74 not out in the second. He was 100 not out in the first innings and 74 not out in the second. He was 100 not out in the first innings and 74 not out in the second.

NEW ZEALAND	
B A Young bow b Matthews	74
R T Latham c Westwood b Matthews	7
* R Rutherford not out	9
M J Gresham not out	8
C L Cairns not out	30
S A Thompson c Matthews	25
T E Blair c Richardson b Matthews	5
G R Larsen not out	4
Extras (nb 1, w 1)	2
Total (5 wickets, 44.1 overs)	148
D N Piel, C Pingle and D K Morrison did not bat.	
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-22, 2-54, 3-86, 4-112, 5-122, 6-142	
BOWLING: Matthews 10-1-38-4; De Villiers 8-1-1-23-0; Seal 10-2-29-0; Symcox 10-0-25-0; Thornton 5-0-18-1; Cairns 7-0-27-1	

SPORT IN BRIEF

Skippers say jury decision is unfair

LEADING skippers in the Whitbread Round the World yacht race continued to criticise the international jury yesterday as the five-man committee wrestled with the question of what is fair when life is at risk (Barry Pickthall writes). Lawrie Smith, on the leading yacht, Intrum Justitia, and other skippers are still awaiting a response from the jury after filing requests on Saturday for a re-hearing of the affair.

Last week, Marcel Leeman, chairman of the independent jury announced that Winston, the United States yacht, should be elevated from fifth to second place for the time her crew lost going back towards Brookfield, the stricken Italian entry. The problem for the rest of the Whitbread 60 fleet is that the 21½-hour allowance brought Winston up to within one minute of the finish time of Smith's yacht and took no account of the fact that the American entry was trailing by 250 miles at the time.

English pair second

BADMINTON: Gill Clark and Nick Ponting ended their world circuit partnership with a defeat but also with honour and second place in the world grand prix finals on Saturday, then saw Indonesia win four of the five titles in Kuala Lumpur yesterday (Richard Eaton writes). The only championship to go elsewhere was the mixed doubles in which the world champions, Thomas Lund, of Denmark, and Cathrine Bengtsson, of Sweden, overcame the world bronze medal winners from England 15-9, 15-7. The result will not affect Ponting's decision to play with Joanne Wright in 1994, leaving Clark to partner Chris Hunt.

Joko Suprianto, the world champion, defeated Heryanto Arbi, the All-England men's champion, in the singles final, 11-15, 15-2, 15-1, and there was a record fourth world grand prix women's title for Susi Susanti, the world Olympic and All-England champion, who beat Ye Zhaoying, of China, 11-3, 12-9.

Wright gets it right

CYCLING: Sue Wright, the best all-round time-trialist in Britain last year, made a winning return to competition yesterday less than two months after giving birth to her first child, Catherine (Peter Bryan writes). She won the Crest CC 25 miles, in gale-force conditions, near Quendon, Essex, in 1hr 15min 25sec. A headwind finish on the last eight miles brought some riders almost to a standstill. Wright reached the 12½-mile halfway point in 28min 45sec but the return run into the strong wind occupied 44min 40sec. She is now enthusiastic to have a full season in competition in 1994.

McKenzie takes title

BOXING: Duke McKenzie defeated John Davison, of Newcastle, in four rounds to secure the vacant British featherweight title in Manchester on Saturday. McKenzie's textbook boxing overwhelmed Davison, and Paul Thomas the referee, had to step in to save him from unnecessary punishment. McKenzie, 30, shook Davison, 35, in the opening minute and continued to find the target repeatedly. He took victory six months after losing the third of his world titles to Daniel Jimenez. McKenzie is the only domestic boxer to win world crowns at three weights.

Cruyff too demanding

FOOTBALL: Johan Cruyff, the coach of Barcelona, the Spanish champions, will not take charge of Holland during the World Cup finals in the United States next year, Dutch television reported at the weekend. The Dutch football association had asked Cruyff to act as coach for the tournament but NOS television said the association had rejected the fee he had demanded as excessive. Dick Advocaat, who successfully steered Holland through the qualifying rounds of the competition at the expense, mainly, of England, is now expected to remain in charge.

Lomas win not enough

TABLE TENNIS: Lisa Lomas, the European silver medal winner, returned to form on Saturday with an excellent win over Nicole Struse, the world quarter-finalist, that briefly threatened to give BFL Grobe, the British League champions from Shropshire, the chance of causing an upset and reaching the European Cup final for the first time. Lomas saved four match points to win 17-21, 21-17, 28-26, for a surprise 2-1 lead over Steinlagen, the title holders. However, the German club, attempting to win the European Cup for the third successive year, recovered to win 4-2.

Carter reaches final

RACKETS: Richard Carter, of Rugby, reached the final of the Foster Cup, the elite singles of the British public schools' championship, after a thrilling victory over William Hale, of Cheltenham. Carter served with power and retrieved superbly fast, in the opening game, found problems against an agile opponent. In the next two games, however, Carter upped the pace and increased his consistency to produce a display that makes him favourite for the final today against Ed Behn, of Radley, who came through against David Cruickshank, the Haileyburyan, in four games.

Dallas close the gap

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: Dallas Cowboys, the Super Bowl champions, clinched a play-off berth with a 28-7 thrashing of the New York Jets in New Jersey on Saturday. Troy Aikman threw for 252 yards and connected with Michael Irvin for two touchdowns. The win improved Dallas's record to ten wins in 14 games and moved them to within half a game of the New York Giants in the NFC East. In the AFC West, Denver Broncos gained their fourth win in their last five games, winning 13-3 in Chicago, taking advantage of five turnovers to improve their record to 9-5.

WORD WATCHING

Answers from page 36

LABARUM

(b) The imperial standard adopted by Constantine the Great (306-337 AD), being the Roman military standard of the late Empire modified by the addition of Christian symbols, hence generally a symbolic standard or banner, from the Greek *labaron*, of unknown origin: "The Labarum of Luther was a banner inscribed with the legend 'Justification by Faith'."

MARIMONDA

(b) A spider-monkey of tropical America, *Ateles belzebuth*, American-Spanish, probably from some native language: J. Adams, *Juan B Ulloa's Voyages*, 1788: "These forests [near Caracas] are infested with snakes and monkeys, particularly a kind called Marimondas."

DEMOT

(a) A member of a Greek (usually Athenian) deme, from the Greek *dēmos*, one of the same deme: "The inscription of new citizens took place at the assembly of the demots."

EROTESIS

(b) A rhetorical figure in which the speaker asks a question that invites the reply "hence", oratorical sally interrogation, from the Greek *erotain* to question, to ask questions: "Erotesis is a figure of speech by which a speaker, in the form of an interrogation, boldly asserts the opposite of what is asked: as (Num) *Creditis auctores hostes?* (Do you really believe the enemy have gone)"

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1 Ng5 Bxd2 2 Rxb7? Qxb7 3 Nxd7 mate.

Scoreboard, page 20

Telephone experts get wrong number

THE message from Racing Telegraph, a Newmarket-based telephone tipping service, was loud and clear. It boasted through an advertisement in the trade press, placed at the end of October: "WEEK IN, WEEK OUT, WE KEEP ON WINNING."

In fact, Racing Telegraph had endured something of a nightmare month. According to information compiled by Racing Information Database (RID), which monitors the profit and loss of premium rates tipsters to a £100 stake, Racing Telegraph's followers would have sustained overall losses of £8,541 in October.

Racing Telegraph's advert would be telling the absolute truth if it were a bookmaking outfit, which it most certainly is not. It is one of around 80 premium rate tipping services enticing punters in their endless quest for winners. In October, Racing Telegraph was not alone in racking up the sort of losses most punters would find unbearable.

Racing Telegraph's performance in November cannot, alas, be revealed. RID's publication of its first monthly league table at the end of October provoked a storm from those languishing in the red, so the fledgling company now restricts its tables to the top left tipsters.

However, the accompanying table for November shows that Racing Telegraph was not among them. Indeed, only six of the 35 tipping services monitored (18 per cent) made profits for their clients in the month of November. In October, the record was even worse when it was four from 30, or 13 per cent.

Such statistics are a damning indictment on the prowess of telephone tipsters. They fare badly when set against the record of the nation's racing journalists, whose daily progress is updated in the *Sporting Life* newspaper. Of the 43 journalists, 18, or 42 per cent, are showing a profit at present.

But what exacerbates the poor performance of telephone tipsters is the sheer cost of

Julian Muscat investigates telephone tipping services and finds many fail to justify their high premium rates with moderate results

obtaining their information. Again, Racing Telegraph excels in this sphere.

With the cost of calls charged at 48p per minute at peak time, the average length of a call to obtain Racing Telegraph's information is in excess of ten minutes, or an average £4.84 per day. Contrast that with the service of Nicholas Mordin, the monthly leader in November, who detained punters for just 30 seconds, or 24p, on his daily bulletin.

Neil Bevan, the founder of RID, stressed that tipsters

should be assessed over at least a six-month period before accurate conclusions can be drawn. He adopted a defensive view about tipsters who fared badly in October and November. He said the two months in question are notoriously difficult for tipping winners, that did not stop the telephone tipsters from trying.

On his decision to restrict the table to the top ten performers each month, he said: "Our service is about finding the best of the best, not the worst of the worst. It may be worth a giggle to see who is

doing badly, but that's not what RID is about."

Inevitably, Bevan is not monitoring telephone tipsters for his own amusement. He supplies the tables on subscription. Not a watchdog in the strictest sense, he has nevertheless established an appropriately named Avoid File to expose pirates and guide clients in the ways of the untrustworthy.

Of the tipping outfit, CRS, he writes: "The service provided two advice which lost, and the phone line then went dead. We would assume the service has ceased trading, or is providing advice by telepathy."

Such black humour is evident in the names of many services, which invariably conjure images of unrivalled

contacts in racing and, consequently, the prospect of instant wealth.

Bevan insisted there are few unscrupulous telephone tipsters, although he did concede: "There are some people who give clients different horses in the same race. That is obviously a total rip-off."

Interest in the performance of telephone tipsters was heightened by remarks made earlier this month by Julian Wilson, BBC Television's racing correspondent, who suggested "a ban on 0898 lines, which take vast fortunes of punters' money out of the system, and are a complete rip-off."

A subsequent response from Mark Holder, a prominent premium-rate tipster, printed in *The Sporting Life*, has prompted Wilson to put the matter in the hands of his solicitor.

Holder was incensed by Wilson's comments on the telephone tipping industry in general, which has mushroomed in recent years. The league tables for October and November suggest Holder himself operates one of the more successful services. Success is relative, however, for the tables illustrate that Holder incurred an overall trading loss for his followers of £420 over the two-month period.

HOW THE LEADING TELEPHONE TIPSTERS HAVE FARED OVER TWO MONTHS

OCTOBER						NOVEMBER							
No advice given	No winners given	Strike rate %	Avg call length	Costs incurred (£)	Profit/ loss (£)	No advice given	No winners given	Strike rate %	Avg call length	Costs incurred (£)	Profit/ loss (£)		
G Sheeky	105	48	43	9m 10s	130.08	+1,834	N Mordin	55	22	40	30secs	6.24	+2,927
BRATS	77	26	33	3m 15s	43.14	+423.47	Money Maker	52	18	34	5m 20s	64.74	+2,581
D Armstrong	131	35	26	7m 10s	88.33	+439.47	Select Racing	44	20	45	5m 50s	88.64	+1,030
Top Horse	50	11	23	6m 40s	30.89	+40.88	BRATS	67	24	35	3m 10s	38.48	+723.08
A Gorte	50	22	44	6m 40s	30.41	-173.03	R Goldstein	50	23	45	6m 10s	75.92	+582.03
N Mordin	55	12	21	30secs	6.72	-264.03	M Holder	49	19	38	4m 15s	51.74	+506.37
R Flood	24	7	29	9m 10s	55.04	-685.88	A Gorte	36	19	52	6m 20s	77.22	-128.68
M Holder	30	20	31	3m 25s	43.47	-656.97	Top Horse	28	9	32	8m 0s	74.88	-194.38
SAS	9	30	30	2m 30s	30.03	-270.47	Classic Raceline	87	32	36	4m 50s	58.16	-337.54
Syndicate	34	35	37	7m 20s	81.20	-1,031	Professionals	21	7	33	5m 25s	65.52	-509.52

Sponsored by Racing Information Database

Supplied by Racing Information Database

Tighter controls needed to check claims of tipsters

Part of racing's charm centres on the rogue element continually striving to exploit the weakest of all human weaknesses—greed. Witness that colourful character Prince Monofulu, whose harmless selling of tips to Derby day crowds transformed him into something of a celebrity.

Over the years there have been countless others to offer information at a price. Arrangements were often complicated, and an air of secrecy simply added to the attraction of paying for a racing cert. All that has now been swept away in the wake of technological advancement.

In its place we have a

contemptible examples of premium-line abuse. For instance, it is not uncommon to hear the same voice on as many as three different services, advising three different callers.

A lack of success alone cannot disqualify telephone tipsters from airing their views. After all, where would we racing journalists now be if our notoriously unreliable selections were cited against us? But what is urgently needed is strong curbs and tighter controls on the advertising of telephone tipping services.

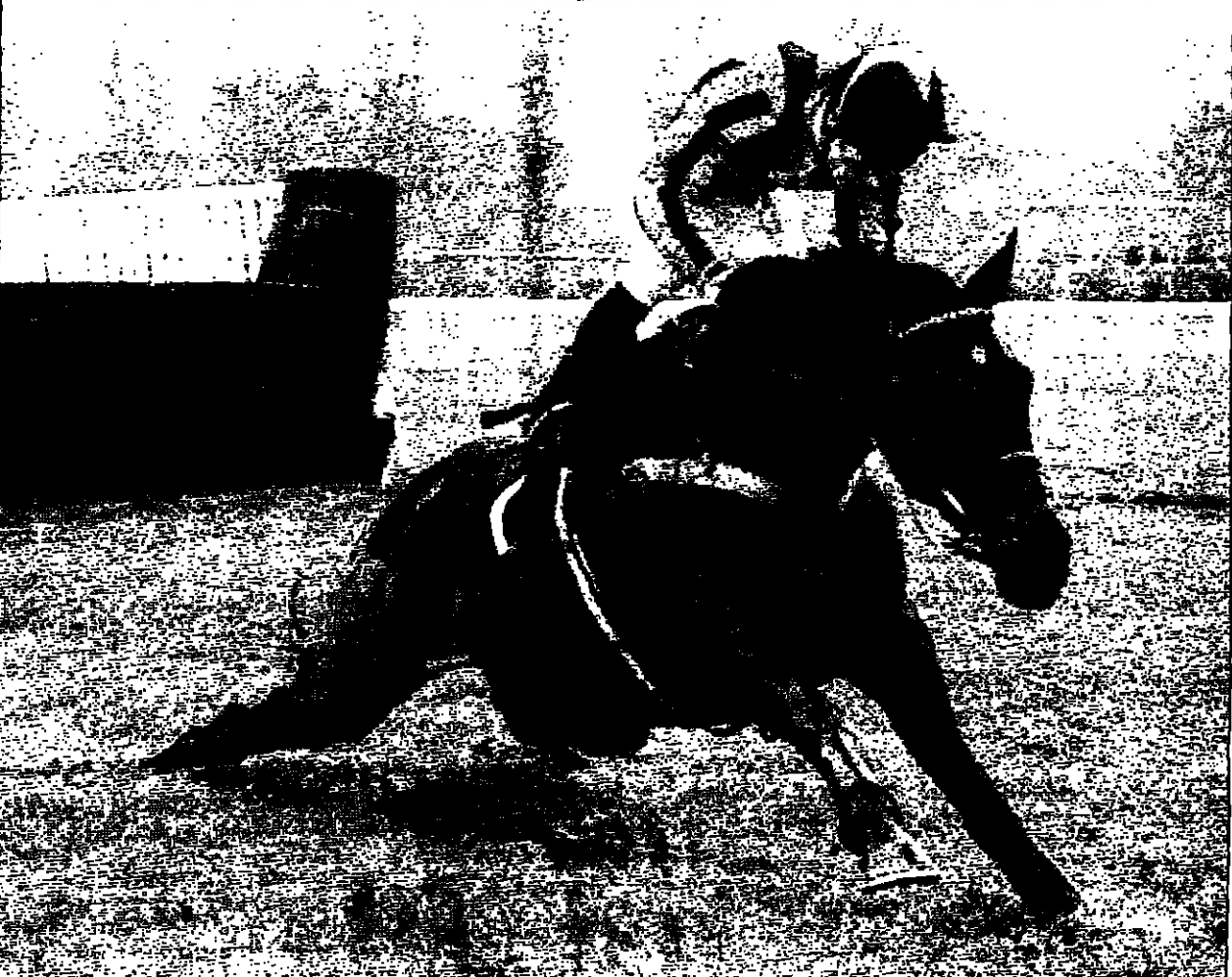
Given that the extent of the problem is unlikely to attract attention from the advertising standards authorities, the sport itself must adopt a more stringent watchdog role than is presently the case. The more honest practitioners would surely welcome such measures.

This is best achieved through the offices of the trade press, which is itself earning considerable revenue from those advertising their telephone lines. The racing press already has in place a framework for cursory checks, but this is manifestly insufficient. Telephone tipsters who keep callers waiting ten minutes before offering their selections should be prevented from advertising at all. Any tipster convinced of the value to his callers of his incessant ramblings would be free to continue after his selections are passed on within, say, three minutes.

In the same way that tipping line adverts must state the cost of the call (48p per minute at peak time), racing publications should insist, for instance, that the fate of a premium line's last five selections be clearly stated. Better still, the racing press should consider subjecting telephone tipsters to a league table similar to those they operate for racing journalists.

A plethora of choice has led to fierce competition for subscribers, which has, in turn, prompted some tipsters to place largely unsubstantiated advertisements proclaiming their non-existent financial success for their clients.

There are other, more



ADRIAN Maguire sits tight as Baydon Star (above) sprawls on landing over the second last at Ascot on Saturday (Robert Wright writes). He completed the course in second place, but had no chance of catching comfortable winner Easy Buck in the Noel Novices' Chase.

and stable jockey Carl Llewellyn, who completed a big-race double with Sweet Duke and Young Hustler.

Sweet Duke stayed on gamely to hold the renewed challenge of Burgoyne in the Long Walk Hurdle, while Young Hustler ran his rivals ragged in the Betterware Cup, winning eased down by six lengths from Latent Talent. He will now run in the King George VI Chase at Kempton Park next Monday, for which he is a best-priced 5-1 with Coral.

One of his rivals at Kempton may be

Travado, who worked well yesterday morning, according to trainer Nicky Henderson. "I couldn't be happier with him," he said. "What he mustn't have tonight is sore shins. I will talk to the owner before we make a decision." He is quoted at 10-1 by William Hill.

The mid-season showpiece received a further boost with the news that the Martin Pipe-trained Rolling Ball may also take part. A faller in the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup on his reappearance, Rolling Ball is 14-1 with Coral and William Hill. Photograph: Ed Byrne

JULIAN MUSCAT



Racing commentary

more instant, more anonymous source. It is the telephone tipsters' service, in which the numbers 0898 could just as easily denote the finishing positions of his last horse selections as his premium-line telephone code.

The rate of growth in telephone tipsters continues unabated. It is testament to their popularity that 80 lines can be profitably operated, although it is ironic that most of them do not make a profit for their customers. A plethora of choice has led to fierce competition for subscribers, which has, in turn, prompted some tipsters to place largely unsubstantiated advertisements proclaiming their non-existent financial success for their clients.

There are other, more

JUMP LEADERS

THUNDERER

12.15 Clevevaun, 12.45 Charlycia, 1.15 Comedy Road, 1.45 Juniors Choice, 2.15 Swift Conveyance, 2.45 Frickley, 3.15 Northumbrian King.

GOING: GOOD. GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES

SIS

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

EDINBURGH

THUNDERER

12.15 Clevevaun, 12.45 Charlycia, 1.15 Comedy Road, 1.45 Juniors Choice, 2.15 Swift Conveyance, 2.45 Frickley, 3.15 Northumbrian King.

GOING: GOOD. GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES

SIS

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134 WILD ATLANTIC (5) (F) 5 Paves 10-11-7 K Jones 50
2.135 CALDEOTT 14 Mts 5 Smith 7-1-0 G Llewellyn 50
3.136 GREENHILL MAIDEN 11 Mts 11-11-11 A Doherty 50
4.137 JUNIORS CHOICE 9 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
5.138 REEF LANE 20 F 10 M A Parker 50
6.139 PATRICK LANE 13 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
7.140 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
8.141 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
9.142 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
10.143 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
11.144 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50
12.145 BEACH PATROL 10 Mts 11-11-11 M A Parker 50

12.15 BUCHAN AUTOMOTIVE MAIDEN HURDLE (12.15) 2m 4f (15 runners)

1.134

Briton achieves Olympia aim

Two Step leaves Whitaker on route to riches

By Jenny MacArthur

MICHAEL Whitaker has moved to second place in the European League of the Volvo World Cup after his comfortable win with Everest Two Step in the Volvo Qualifier at the Olympia show jumping championships on Saturday.

Although Whitaker has now won six classes at the show, the qualifier was the one on which he had set his sights. "I've been second in the competition three times," the Yorkshire-born rider said. "I wasn't going to make it a fourth."

His chances of winning were increased when the favourite, Frank Sneath, of Germany, hit three fences in the opening round. But Whitaker, who won the Bordeaux qualifier with Two Step earlier this month, had little need of such an advantage.

Drawn last in the nine-horse jump-off, only two were clear by the time he came into the ring. They were Dirk Hafemeister, of Germany, who had the fastest time on Priamos, and Geoff Billington, on Rhapsody, who had produced one of the best rounds of his career.

"I knew Hafemeister's time could be beaten," Whitaker said. "It was just a matter of leaving the fences standing."

His older brother, John, who had had two fences down on Everest Gammon in the opening round, advised Michael on where he could save time. "If I can't win the class then the next best person to win is Michael," he said cheerfully.

Lifted by the vociferous, capacity crowd, the Belgian-born Two Step showed his class with a superb round,

finishing with a "flyer" over the last, a gallop which helped to cut 0.61sec off Hafemeister's time.

The win earned Whitaker a £14,000 car and the chance to claim the riches on offer in the new grand slam series, which consists of four of the 12 World Cup qualifying rounds. This was the second leg, the first having taken place in Berlin last month. There is £40,000 for two wins, £80,000 for three and just over £200,000 for

RESULTS

VOLVO WORLD CUP QUALIFIER 1: Everest Two Step (M. Whitaker, GB) 0.61, 37.70sec; 2. Priamos (D. Hafemeister, GER) 0.28, 37.1; 3. Rhapsody (G. Billington, GB) 0.41, 36. European League positions: 1. J. Larkins (4th) (GB); 2. M. Whitaker (GB) 66; 3. G. Sneath (GB) 51.

CHRISTMAS STOCKING STAKES 1: Everest Major Winger (N. Skelton, GB) 0.25, 34.4; 2. San Fildorado (D. Sneath, GB) 0.30, 31; 3. Amor's Me (I. Beesbaum, GB) 0.42, 33.

CHRISTMAS KNOCK-OUT 1: A. N. (W. Melliger, GB) 0.25, 34.4; 2. C. C. (S. Sneath, GB) 0.25, 34.4; 3. R. S. (M. Fuchs, GB) 0.25, 34.4.

FATHER CHRISTMAS STAKES 1: Everest Libby (M. Whitaker, GB) 0.42, 37.7; 2. San Fildorado (D. Sneath, GB) 0.42, 37.7; 3. Everest Blaker (M. Whitaker, GB) 0.42, 37.7.

TOP SCORERS: Everest Major Winger (N. Skelton, GB) 1,370pts; 2. San Fildorado (D. Sneath, GB) 1,340; 3. True Grit (P. Charles, GB) 1,330.

three. These are huge sums compared with the usual prizes. Discounting the car, Whitaker has earned the grand total of £7,800 from five wins this week.

He will probably ride his European bronze medal-winner, Everest Midnight Madness, in the next leg in Brussels, in February, to increase his chances of success.

Nick Skelton, though out of luck in the qualifier on Saturday, when Everest Dollar Girl

hit both parts of the double in the jump-off, was back in the winner's enclosure yesterday when he and Everest Major Winger won the Christmas Stocking Stakes.

Going third out of the five in the jump-off, they had the crowd gasping as each turn became tighter and more daring. They finished, to tumultuous applause, in a time of 29.84sec.

None had matched the speed by the time the last rider, Sneath, entered the ring on Dorina. A hush descended as they set off. The turns looked smoother than Skelton's, the jumping every bit as fluent. But as Sneath made the final turn to the last fence, Dorina lost her footing and all but fell. Sneath had her quickly back on her feet but the clock recorded 30.31sec as they passed the finishing line.

Afterwards Sneath disclosed that the mare had had a bad slip-up at the practice fence on Saturday just before the qualifier, which may have explained her unaccustomed 12 faults in that round.

Earlier yesterday Willi Melliger, the European Champion, from Switzerland, recorded his first win of the week in the Christmas Knock-out. Melliger, on Athlet, finished just ahead of Jean-Claude Vangeenberghe, of Belgium, in a boisterous final round.

Melliger had hoped to gain more points in the qualifier on Saturday, in which he finished fifth on Concorde C. He is only 27th in the European League, from which the top 19 qualify for the World Cup final in Holland in April.

حديقة من الاحل



Peter Eriksson and All Master in action in the Christmas Knock-out yesterday

Wasps put damper on Pirates' move back home

By Norman de Mesquita

THERE was great cause for rejoicing in Peterborough on Saturday as the Pirates ice hockey team moved back into the rink 11 weeks after having been evicted.

A superb effort on the part of players, supporters and management has wrought a transformation. The damaged refrigeration plant has been repaired and the ice pad made slightly smaller to allow extra seating to be installed.

Durham Wasps won the game 9-5 to put a damper on the celebrations, but the Pirates were obviously short of practice, having spent so much time renovating the rink in recent weeks.

Mark Salisbury put them two ahead in the first four minutes, but the Wasps had pulled back to 3-3 by the end of the first period and their superior conditioning proved decisive.

Cardiff Devils gained a measure of revenge for their defeat in the Benson and Hedges Cup final, beating Murrayfield Racers 8-4 in Scotland in a game that was marred by too many penalties.

Hilton Ruggles scored five times for the Devils, his second five-goal game of the season.

Billingham Bombers suffered their fifth successive defeat, at home to Nottingham Panthers, and Basingstoke Beavers were also beaten at home by Effe Flyers, to take their winless streak to nine.

In the first division, Slough Jets overwhelmed Oxford City Stars in the sort of game that does the sport a disservice. It is obvious that the enlarged first division was not a good idea on the part of the British Ice Hockey Association because there are too many mediocre teams and too many one-sided games.

No doubt the Slough players, all of whom scored at least a point, were delighted, but a scoreline of 23-4 is hardly guaranteed to attract spectators next time the teams meet.

Milton Keynes Kings had a similarly one-sided win over Lee Valley Lions, leading 12-1 at the end of the second period on their way to a 15-3 success. The Lions have enough problems without spending 60 minutes in the penalty box as they did on Saturday which severely restricted what faint hope they might have had against the Kings.

Guildford pay price for letting Irish join Worthing

By Nicholas Harling

SINCE Colin Irish left Guildford Kings the season before last, he has taken a special delight in reminding his old club of the exceptional basketball talent they let go.

The story was no different on Saturday, when the oft-sin England international collected 39 points to keep Worthing Bears on course for a successful defence of their league title.

But for Irish's prolific scoring, Guildford might have been able to celebrate the belated arrival of their pay packets, or half-full pay packets, with a surprise victory on the south coast. Until the last 90 seconds, when the score stood at 85-85, they looked like doing so.

But Irish, with three throws from the foul-line and two jump shots, scored the last seven points without reply from England's European representatives to give Worthing their 92-85 win.

Guildford, 22-21 ahead after the first quarter but trailing 47-41 at half-time, had looked an improved team than of late. "Wouldn't you play better with a pay cheque after going four months without one?" Alton Byrd, the Guildford guard, said.

Before the money from Barry Dow, the Kings' joint owner, had arrived late on Friday, the match was in doubt because of a player boycott. Though still far from fully paid up, they were persuaded to fulfil the fixture. "I can't say what we've had in percentage terms," Byrd said.

Like Irish, Trevor Gordon was a player who left Guildford for richer pickings elsewhere, in his case Manchester. Like Irish, Gordon was also leading scorer for his club at the weekend, with 21 points.

It helped the Giants to overwhelm Doncaster Panthers 94-67 to keep them top of the Budweiser League, although they have played a game more than Worthing.

Thames Valley Tigers, who have lost only one match, one fewer than Worthing and Manchester, maintained their challenge with an easy 102-73 win over Oldham Celts with the help of 26 points from Nigel Lloyd.

Without Russ Saunders, who is in the United States, and with four players on four fouls long before the end, Sunderland Saints still managed to force double overtime at home to Derby Bucks before succumbing 97-95.

Schneider increases pressure on Wachter

VRENI Schneider, of Switzerland, put more pressure on her rival, Anja Haas, in St Anton, Austria, yesterday as she won the Alpine World Cup slalom event. The Austrian showed her fighting spirit, though, by refusing to give up after a blunder wrecked her race chances — a decision which kept her just ahead in the overall rankings.

Schneider, 29, won in 1min 47.84sec, beating Pernilla Wiberg (1:48.58) and Kristina Andersson (1:48.71) and staking her claim as a favourite for the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer.

It was Schneider's second victory of the season after her Santa Caterina slalom win.

The combined weekend crown went to Renate Goetschl, the Austrian teenager, but it was Wachter's performance which provided the focal point of yesterday's event. Fourth fastest after the first run, the 20-year-old set a splendid early pace before rattling a gate and almost grinding to a halt. Wachter seemed on the verge of skiing out but got going again after realising there were still World Cup points on offer.

At St Anton on Saturday, Anja Haas sped down a shortened downhill course for her third World Cup win. Renate Goetschl, of Austria, was second and Emi Kawabata, of Japan, third.

Tomba settles for second place on his birthday

By Our Sports Staff

STEVE Locher, of Switzerland, won his first World Cup giant slalom in Alta Badia yesterday, turning hopes of a perfect 27th birthday into a perfect 28th. The Italian, who finished second over the course in the Italian Dolomites.

Locher, second in the first run, clocked the fastest time in the second for a winning aggregate of 2min 37.54sec. Locher, 26, who comes from Salins, had gained his only previous World Cup win in a super giant slalom in 1990.

Tomba, who was 1.01sec behind the winner, edged out Christian Mayer, of Austria,

by two-hundredths of a second. The first-run leader, was third after a mistake near the end of the run.

Guenter Mader, another Austrian, took fourth place ahead of Franck Piccard, the Frenchman. Marc Girardelli, of Luxembourg, the defending World Cup champion, finished thirteenth.

Tomba, who was fifth after the first run, thrilled his thousands of supporters, some playing trumpets, many waving flags, with an outstanding performance in the second leg, which lifted him three places on the steep Gran Risa course, which had 56 gates in both

runs.

Tomba, the three-time Olympic champion, who won two slalom races earlier in the season said: "Following the poor giant slalom showing in Val d'Isere, this was a great improvement. It was a tough race, on a tough course. I am happy with my second place."

Tomba had finished seventeenth — his worst performance in four years — in Monday's previous World Cup giant slalom, a race won by Mayer.

Kjetil Andre Aamodt, of Norway, the World Cup leader, was eighth and now has 421 points from nine races, 27 ahead of Mader with Tomba third on 374.

Patrick Ortlieb, of Austria, the Olympic champion, won his first World Cup downhill race by beating Daniel Mahrer, the Swiss veteran, by 0.41sec in the second speed event of the season on Saturday.

Jean Luc Cretier, of France, a late starter at No 37, was a surprise third, ahead of Rob Boyd, of Canada.

Ortlieb, considered a "lucky winner" when he scored his first international victory in the 1992 Olympic downhill, showed an impressive combination of skill and power on a Saslonch course, where he was second in 1988 and third four years later.



Locher happy after beating local favourite

Results, page 20

Conway shows England form

Bourville 5
Isca 3

By Sydney Friskin

NICK Conway, 19, who might soon be wearing a senior England hockey shirt, scored four goals at Birmingham University yesterday as he practically carried a depleted Bourville side into the fifth round of the Hockey Association Cup.

Robert Skinner, who has played eight times for England, scored all three goals for Isca in a remarkable show of resilience.

After playing for the England under-21 team in the junior world cup last September, Conway broke a finger and was out of action for several weeks, but he had plenty of power in his hands yesterday. In 16 minutes he shot Bourville into a 2-0 lead with a scoop high into the net and a goal from a penalty stroke.

Isca retaliated with two goals by Skinner in the 18th and 19th minutes, the first from a long corner and the second from a cross pass by Evennett.

In the second half, Bryant, the Bourville goalkeeper, made a brilliant save off Evennett at a short corner before Conway put Bourville 3-2 ahead with another penalty stroke conversion. Henley-King put the finishing touch to a brilliant move initiated by

Walid Abdo for Bourville's fourth goal in the 54th minute. With only nine minutes left, Skinner put Isca back in the game by converting a short corner. Bourville's fears were allayed when Conway scored again from a short corner.

Bourville will meet either Old Loughians or City of Portsmouth in the next round. Earlier in the day Trojans earned the right to meet Harrogate in the fifth round with a 4-1 victory over Bloxwich. Trojans led 1-0 at half-time with a goal by Paul Tubbs and added three more goals from short corners in the space of 15 minutes in the second half from Jackson, Tubbs and Lane-Smith. Bloxwich scored a consolation goal in the 55th minute when Nigel Hale converted a penalty stroke.

They had a good spell after surviving the first 20 minutes under pressure, but made nothing of three short corners. BOURVILLE: P Bryant, L Holt, M Meredith, C Meredith, R Turner, Walid Abdo, D O'Leary, J Wilson, A Gurnall, N Conway, D Henley-King. ISCA: J Hyatt, J Miller, G Kohler, M Bryant, N Bowe (capt), C O'Sullivan, G Skinner, P Levesey, R Skinner, J Evennett, H Clayton. Unopposed: G O'Connor (Northern Counties), S Sanghara (Southern Counties).

England won the weekend Lille qualifying tournament for the indoor European Cup men's championship. On Saturday, England beat Sweden 6-5, then drew 1-1 with France before beating Switzerland 7-5 yesterday.

Results, page 20

Urgent need for anglers to speak out with one voice

Brian Clarke welcomes moves towards a liaison group but expresses doubt over its effectiveness

THE three bodies that represent game fishing, coarse fishing and sea fishing are to take the first tentative steps to provide the sport as a whole with the single voice it desperately needs.

The Salmon and Trout Association, the National Federation of Anglers and the National Federation of Sea Anglers are to form a liaison group drawn from time to time: supplemented from time to time by representatives of other bodies. The group will meet "at least two or three times a year", formalising contacts which, the announcement reads, have in the past taken place informally.

While the move is to be welcomed, it is difficult to see how the ambitions identified can be met. Although better than nothing, it will take more than a couple of ad hoc meetings a year by these very different organisations to make the group "a decisive force for the benefit of the whole of the sport in discussions with government, the

National Rivers Authority and the Sports Council".

This is especially so given the widely-differing processes that each has for arriving at the individual positions they will need to bring to the table. The STA has relatively clean and formalised mechanisms, the NFA has an unwieldy organisation of regions and clubs to consult and the NFSA has little in the way of formal organisation at all.

The reality is that angling is beset with issues and pressures that affect the entire sport and which need direct and urgent focus. The real requirement is not for occasional liaison but, at a minimum, for some kind of standing, tight-knit and sensibly-resourced strategy group which could identify emerging issues and analyse and respond to them within the context of

an agreed vision of the future.

To suggest that it would be easy to give effect to such a group would be ludicrous: but the need exists and the skills for staffing it — albeit volunteer and part-time — also exist. What is required is commitment: a willingness to suppress sectional ambition and to co-ordinate the energies of the lawyers, politicians, public relations and business experts with which fishing, and above all game fishing, is replete.

The need for such a body has long been recognised by commentators and others. Indeed, the founding of an umbrella body was proposed by the independent review of angling commissioned in 1991 by the Sports Council and the new defunct National Anglers Council. However, such a body would inevitably

subordinate some individual interests of the STA, the NFA and the NFSA. As a consequence, while proclaiming fears of "more bureaucracy", the three groups have killed the idea. In the mean time, the sport has been adrift while all about it the reference points have changed.

Members of all three organisations were stung recently when the British Field Sports Society (BFSS), a body that many anglers believe should be kept at arm's length, appeared to move to fill the vacuum — and it may well have been this that partly triggered the recent announcement. The BFSS appointed an angling and fisheries advisor, whose first public act was to declare the manifest truth that "there is currently no focal point for the whole of the sport of angling". The BFSS was, he said, "the only forum where angling and fisheries interests may meet and discuss problems".

The result of the inaction of recent times has been that angling was

caught at sixes and sevens by the NRA's recent rod licence review and went into the debate without the basis for a common response.

The sport still has no coherent positions on a range of important public opinion issues. Fishing has fared hopelessly compared with other sports, even other water users. In getting Sports Council funds — a point blindingly illustrated by the replies to two recent parliamentary questions.

In 1992-3 canoeing, with 100,000 participants, received £346,426 or £3.46 per head. In the same year, angling, with "2.7 million adults actively participating", received £46,800, or £1.7p per head.

For all of this, the move announced this week is progress and the issues listed above are known to be high on the agenda. All hinges on the realism, vigour and commitment that the individual groups now bring to the task they have set. A great deal rides on the outcome.

THE TIMES

Crossword range

Please remember (except where specified) to add mail order charges below (NS) - No Software

The Times Book of Jumbo Crosswords £3.99 (NS) add £1.26 postage (UK only)

The Times Jumbo Crosswords Book 2 £4.99 (NS) add £1.00 postage (UK only)

The Times Jumbo Concise Crosswords Book 1 £4.99 (NS) add £1.00 postage (UK only)

The Times Crosswords, Books 1 to 13 (Penguin) £3.99 each (NS)

The Times Crosswords, Books 14, 15 & 16 £3.50 each

The Times Concise Crosswords, 1 & 2 (240 puzzles) £4.99 each (NS)

The Times Concise Crosswords, Books 3 & 4 £3.50 each

The Sunday Times Crosswords, Books 1 to 9 (Penguin) £3.99 each (NS)

The Sunday Times Crosswords, Books 10 and 11 £3.50 each

The Sunday Times Concise Crosswords, Books 1 & 2 £3.50 each

NEW! from Times Books - just released for Christmas

Price £3.50 each

The Seventeenth Book of The Times Crosswords

The Fifth Book of The Times Concise Crosswords

The Twelfth Book of Sunday Times Crosswords

The Times Computer Crosswords by David Alkenhead

ALL the above titles, except those marked NS, have been added to the Computer Crossword range below, designed with help levels for Beginners and Experts alike — (circa 60 crosswords each)

The Times Computer Crosswords Vols 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

The Times Jumbo Puzzles 1932-1987 (56 puzzles)

The Sunday Times Computer Crosswords 1, 2, 3, 4

NEW! Just released for Christmas

Sunday Times Computer Crosswords Volumes 5 & 6

For ALL IBM PCs and compatibles with CGA, EGA, VGA Super VGA graphics and Acorn computers.

Software prices: £9.95 per title

Mail order charges including airmail postage

UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands add 75p per item

Europe (inc Irish Rep) add £1.25 per item

Zone 1 add £1.75 per item (inc Australia, Africa)

Zone 2 add £2.00 per item (inc Australia, N Zealand)

Surface mail worldwide add £1 per item

US dollar cheques welcome - (£1 - US\$1.50)

Please send cheques or postal orders (sorry, no credit cards) payable to Akom Ltd, Times Crossword Account to Akom Limited, 51 Manor Lane, London SE13 5QW

Enquiries, telephone 081-852 4575 (24 hours)

Return delivery (UK)

Witt's art makes deep impression



Simon Barnes sees
a former champion
take a step towards
her Olympic dream

What's art got to do with it? Katarina Witt lost 6-4. Or if you prefer, 6-2. Well, Brian, at the end of the day, jumps win matches. Funny old game, but that's sport, right?

The local girl, Tanja Szewczenko, 16, performed six triple jumps and they were all masterpieces of athleticism and precision. Witt's sumptuous programme included but four triples, and two of them were technically flawed.

Witt, 28, and more compellingly graceful than ever, finished second in the German national figure skating championships in Hagen this weekend, second to a brilliant, bouncing, jumping machine. Witt goes on to the European championships in Copenhagen in the new year and if she finishes as one of the top two Germans, she will go on to the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer. That is what Witt's comeback to competitive skating, after six years away being a professional superstar, is all about.

The endless circular argument of whether figure skating is art or sport was decided this weekend in favour of sport. The better athlete won.

Figure skating has a score of two halves and the competition was won and lost with the marks for technical merit. Szewczenko's collection of 155 eclipsed Witt's 5.5s. Naturally, Witt's marks for artistic impression were higher, 5.8s and 5.9s, but were not enough. Szewczenko replied with 5.7s and a few 5.8s: game set and match to the teenage leaper.

In point of fact, Szewczenko's dance made absolutely no artistic impression on me at all. Well, not beyond that of a brilliantly athletic teenage girl revelling in her own ability and purpose. In fact, in the entire competition, every dance save one was a saccharine, alcohol-free nugget. Artistic sights were set to a subterranean level. My own marks for artistic impression for the lot were a competition-wide nul points, and they were lucky to get that.

The difference between Witt's performance and everybody else's was that hers really did have some aspect of art. She said afterwards: "The best thing was that people told me they had the shivers when they watched my programme. It's



Witt in captivating form during her free programme at the German national figure skating championships. She qualified for the European championships by finishing second. Photograph: Karl-Heinz Krefelt

what I wanted." A dance to "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" sounds painfully naïf, there is no getting away from it. But Witt is perhaps physically incapable of naivety. She could turn the hockey-coke into an expression of grace and glory.

Her costume was again designed to emphasise the difference between women

and little girls. She shunned the fairy costumes and the elf outfits and wore no glitter or sequins, no gaudy or beads. She wore a knee-length, jawbone-high red dress that both clung and flowed, and with grace danced her dance of war and peace. It was soaring and emotional, and it filled the Gysenberghalle with shivers. To award marks for

the artistic impression made by Witt's dance alongside the rest was like giving marks to *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* and a Barbara Cartland novel. The judges concluded that Proust, at 5.9, is 0.1 of a mark better than Cartland, at 5.8. But this is a sport. Sport must be quantifiable, sport must have rules and if you don't like the sporting heat,

you stay out of the Olympic kitchen. Witt was here of her own choice and she made a grand show of being delighted. "Second place was not important. Today I realised a personal goal," she said, slaying reporters right and left with her scattergun smile. "It is important to go for your dreams and not to listen to anybody else."

Witt's Olympic dream lives on. It looks as if she will make it to the Lillehammer Games next year — but to win? Szewczenko was this year third in the European junior championships: with such a form-line, the smart punter sits on his wallet.

Witt seems destined to become a glorious Olympic side-show, to dance her dance of war and peace in her clinging and flowing red dress, and to leave all of us all over the world agreeing that it was the only piece of genuine artistry in the competition and what a shame she did not get a medal.

But this odd pursuit of figure skating is a sport before it is an art. There is one very clear way of learning that: to watch a solid afternoon of free programme figure skating. It became clear very early on that the Gysenberghalle was actually a theatre of cruelty.

Woman after woman, girl after girl, performed her triple in glitter and spangles, and girl after girl, woman after woman, fell, got up and skated on, smiling through her humiliation. The pain was as clear on those painted faces as it is on the faces of humiliated football teams.

It is a very painful business, watching this parade of disasters. Television tends only to show us the world's top skaters and their very occasional dramatic tumbles. You somehow forget about the difficulty of the manoeuvres, the treachery of the surface.

But a relentless procession of the hopeful and the second best can only be a succession of tumbles. Just about every dance routine was punctuated at least once by the anguished sighs of an audience sympathising with a crashing disaster.

Ballet is not like that. Ballet dancers do not perform on the far edge of the possible, do not perform on the brink of humiliation. Control is a requirement of most art forms: if a dancer fell every five minutes, ballet would be silly.

But falls come literally every five minutes in an afternoon of free programme figure skating. The few skaters that landed every jump excited admiration, not for their artistry but for their physical and mental composure under extreme stress. It was a sporting, not an aesthetic response.

This is a high-risk business, like all sports, and Witt is taking a crazy risk in coming back. She has defied all precedent in returning to athletic standards she reached when she won Olympic gold six years ago — but that is no longer good enough. Standards — athletic standards — have moved onwards and upwards. Artistic standards, now, they are another matter. This weekend, they soared to heights they have not touched for six years.

RESULT: 1. T Szewczenko, 1.5; 2. K Witt, 3.0; 3. M Kimmann, 4.5.

Treorchy happy to forgo cup glory in search of promotion

Pontypridd.....28
Treorchy.....6

BY GERALD DAVIES

FROM all the pre-match talk, Treorchy did not really have their heart in this match. Yet this was the fourth round of the Swale Cup; there was a possibility of glory, or more glory, shall I say. But they were lukewarm.

Treorchy have cut a swathe through the second division of the Welsh League and remain unbeaten. They want to better themselves; to get on in the world. Treorchy's close eyes are focused, as they say, on the first division.

They are a small club, with attitude if you like, from near the top of the valley of the Rhondda Fawr (there is, I had better inform you a "Fawr" as well, "great" and "small", you see).

They have had enough of rugby anonymity; perhaps an-



Jenkins: top scorer

onymity of any kind against which their marvellous male voice choir — almost single handedly — has been battling away for years.

But glory is short-lived, enjoyed only for a month or so, until the next round, and vanishes perhaps, leaving a mere memory. Sweet though that is, it is not the answer for the likes of Treorchy. They are not in the business of instant glory, the flash-in-the-pan stuff which an underdog victory allows in the cup. Enjoy the brief hullabaloo and so what? Wait around on the off chance that the team will do it again next year? Or rather, as is more the fashion, until the goalkeeper of one season becomes the goalkeeper of the next.

Reputation is firm. No. Cup rugby for Treorchy is fame written on water: celebrations in the old year, vanquished in the new. It is a perishable dream.

It is the league championship that provides the opportunity of a more enduring kind, and with Pontypridd

winning by two goals, a try and three penalty goals to two penalty goals, Treorchy can return to concentrate on the objective they set themselves at the start of the season.

But Pontypridd showed them a trick or two and generally gave indications that to enjoy the company of the upper half of the first division will require a good deal extra. It will not dismay Treorchy at this stage.

They can entertain such thoughts if, or as is more likely, when they reach the first division. First things first, as it were. Despite the evident disparity this was still a good match of a kind that, given the atrociously wet conditions, could hardly have been expected. "Cup rugby" is meant as a defining term, signifying a defensive game, normally played among the 16 forwards and with half backs, having polished their boots, attempting to kick the leather off the ball.

This is a euphemism for dull, predictable rugby for 80 minutes and is thrilling only in anticipation of the eventual outcome. It need not be like this.

This game showed as much, as both teams in the early stages varied their tactics. Pontypridd had many a sweeping movement engineered by both forward and backs. All three of their tries eventually resulted from storming drives of various sorts from the pack, but this did not lessen the impact of what went on in between.

One such drive began on the visitors' 22-metre line and ended with a scrum on the try line, from which a huge shove gave Lloyd a try to add to Jenkins's third-minute penalty goal.

By half-time, the stand-off half had kicked two more and with two conversions of Paul John's and Prosser's tries in the second half, have given him 232 points for the season and he is Welsh rugby's top scorer.

Luc Evans kicked penalty goals for the visitors. Jenkins's consistency with 28 points last week against Newbridge and nine penalty goals against Pontypridd the previous weekend makes an unarguable case for his inclusion as the Welsh stand-off half. He and Paul John are Pontypridd's guiding lights.

PONTYPRIDD: Tries: D Lloyd, P John, G Prosser, Conversions: N Jenkins (2). Penalty goals: L Evans (2). TREORCHY: Tries: D Hughes, A Jones, K O'Connell, P Thomas, D Evans, C Harman, G Davies, C Gwynn, P Knight, D Jones, S Evans, J Burryon, G Owen, J Burnell. Referee: W D Bevan (Clydach).

Taking rugby's revolutionary age into account

SELDOM can rugby union have seen such a literary outpouring as in 1993, with a score of books riding the crest of the wave created by the game's popularity. They are autobiographical, technical and historical, and there are even a couple of coffee-table offerings from Bath and Leicester.

Amid a glutted market two shine out for a style rare in rugby's literature. The merit of the first, Stephen Jones's *Endless Winter*, has been recognised by the award of the William Hill sports book of the year prize. The other is *The Great Number Tens* by Frank Keating.

An additional pleasure is the contrast in the two authors' approach. Jones writes with a warmth and a passion that sweeps both him and the reader along as he charts the course of a year in rugby, from Edinburgh to Invercargill. Keating's style is more whimsical: he enjoys pursuing the country lanes rather

than the motorways in portraying the game's playmakers of the last 100 years. *Endless Winter* describes itself as "the inside story of the rugby revolution". The revolution has taken more than a year to materialise and Jones weaves the threads together to make a compelling strand about a game struggling to come to terms with the late twentieth century.

"Inside story" is perhaps pitching it high, since few of us are privy to the arcane debates which proliferate among rugby's governing bodies, but Jones is angry, humorous and sad in turn about the vast number of changes which have characterised rugby since the inaugural World Cup in 1987.

It is the author's strength that you do not have to agree with him to recognise the huge affection he retains for a game which embraced him as a youngster in Wales and has

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

never let him go. Rugby league receives a spectacular blast, as do union's lawmakers, whose latest endeavours have brought their game far closer to resembling rugby league than they can possibly have imagined. Jones takes deserved pride in the campaign which his newspaper, *The Sunday Times*, led against the new ruck-maul law.

There have been times when Frank Keating has overdone the Dylanesque (Thomas, not Bob) approach. There are only so many adjectives to be attached to a humble noun but *The Great Number Tens* does not fall into the trap. One can imagine Keating chortling to himself as he re-reads ancient histories about the James brothers, of Swansea, those "curly-headed marmosets", or

reveling in being the only journalist to hear Mark Ella unveiling his philosophy to coaches and teachers in the Malpas clubhouse.

Keating is as generous with words as he is to his subjects. These, already the stuff of legend, are enhanced by an author who recognises the opportunity for genius to assert itself even within the framework of a complex team game. Here, too, is affection and appreciation by rivals. Cliff Morgan calls Jack Kyle "the loveliest of players, the loveliest of men".

Perhaps the best of the autobiographies is *Straight from the Hart*. Paul Thomas's account of the career and philosophy of the former Australian and New Zealand coach, John Hart, Hart is not your typical Kiwi, which was probably part of his problem. Fast on his verbal feet, he became the focal point for the jealousies which Auckland's sustained success during the Eight-

ies attracted elsewhere in New Zealand.

The strength of the book is that Thomas has sought out opinions on the controversial episodes that prevented Hart exerting the same influence on his country's team as he did on his province, such as his relationship with his co-coach, Alex Wyllie, the 1991 World Cup, the dismissal of Wayne Shelford as All Blacks captain. It is a sad reflection on the game that an intellect as powerful as Hart's does not have an active role in its development at present.

Endless Winter by Stephen Jones (Mainstream Publishing, £14.99); *The Great Number Tens* by Frank Keating (Partridge Press, £16.99); *Straight from the Hart* by Paul Thomas (Moa Beckett/Queen Anne Press, £16.95).

DAVID HANDS

Promotion for Yorkshiremen

By DAVID HANDS

TWO Yorkshiremen, Brian Campsall and Stuart Piercy, have been elevated to the Rugby Football Union's (RFU) international referees list for 1994. They join last year's three-man panel in response to the request from the International Rugby Football Board that each country offers five officials from which appointments may be made.

The RFU are optimistic that Ed Morrison, the most experienced referee in their quintet, will be fit for the new year, when Englishmen are due to handle the two internationals in Dublin: Ireland against Wales on February 5 and against Scotland on March 5. Morrison damaged knee ligaments at Northampton in early November.

However Scotland have decided to list only four referees and there are concerns in Ireland, whose list has yet to be confirmed, at the relative strength in depth of their leading officials. Wales have added Clayton Thomas and David Davies, both of whom handled games during the recent New Zealand tour.

Denis McBride, the international flanker who led Ulster to a shared Irish inter-provincial championship on Saturday, may not be available for Ireland's opening championship match against France on January 15. McBride faces an examination today of knee ligaments damaged during the 24-21 win over Munster at Ravenhill.

It is the tenth successive year in which Ulster have won or shared the title, though they came from behind to beat Munster, who established a 21-11 lead through seven penal-

ties by O'Sullivan. Wilkinson scored Ulster's early try with McCall, who also emphasised his class at centre, kicking the goals.

However, Humphreys, the stand-off half, paved the way for the try by Howe that put Ulster back into contention. His break and chip allowed McCall to free the ball for Howe, a student at St Andrews University, to score, and when McCall kicked his third penalty and Humphreys dropped a goal, Ulster nosed ahead.

They still had to weather a final Munster storm: the visitors forced a five-metre scrum only for Galway to be penalised for the touchline for throwing a punch, though the British Isles player claimed afterwards that his headband had been pulled down to obstruct his vision. The penalty allowed Ulster to clear their lines and breath again.

Leinster, who beat Ulster earlier in the season, beat Connacht 15-11 to claim their share of the title. However, Leinster were dependent on five penalties by McGowan, the promising young Blackrock College stand-off, to see them home against White's two penalties and a try by Leahy for Connacht.

Ireland may be without Fulcher, the Cork Constitution lock, for the A International against Scotland in Glasgow on December 28. He has strained ankle ligaments and Rigney, of Greystones, stands by.

INTERNATIONAL REFEREES: England: B Campsall, G Harman, S Morrison, S Piercy, A Springwood; Scotland: J Fleming, D MacLennan, S Morrison, S Piercy, A Springwood; Wales: D MacLennan, S Morrison, S Piercy, A Springwood, S Piercy.

Try scorer extraordinary

RUGBY league is a game which produces many heroes yet few stars, let alone superstars. To transcend the parochial boundaries of the sport, as Martin Offiah has done, marks him as a very special player.

A book charting his rise and fall, although rich in detail, gives the reader little insight into the man. Though there again, is there anything particularly penetrating to be seen?

His psyche is often portrayed as complicated, but Offiah is disarmingly honest about what he likes best and that is scoring tries — 300 and counting. *Offiah — A Blaze of Glory* by David Lawrenson (Nethurst, £12.99) celebrates his genius by recounting Offiah's startling on-field exploits.

It reveals no deep-seated angst, no skeletons to tumble

from cupboards, just a magnificent obsessive who knows his worth and adores playing to the gallery.

He might have represented England at rugby union, might have done so at cricket — he bowled Graham Gooch in a trial for Essex second XI — and football was his abiding passion. Then came Doug Laughton, coach of Widnes and champion sweet-talker.

Laughton, as he does in life, looms large in this entertaining volume. His persistence and persuasiveness brought Offiah north from Rosslyn Park. He also changed the pronunciation of his protégé's name from "Offier" to "O'fiah". "It was probably worth a few bob anyway," Laughton said. "He probably wouldn't have been as big a star if his name had been Smith. 'Chariots' Smith doesn't sound right."

If Offiah has done much to lift the cloth-cap image from the sport, then *When Push Comes to Shove* (Yorkshire Arts Circus, £9.95) unashamedly plants it back down. It is a celebration in often biting anecdotes and brooding photography by Michael Steele, of what the author, Ian Clayton, describes as a birthright for many people.

From the coffee table to the hardy annuals, in which the game is painstakingly well-documented, the August *Rothmans Rugby League Year Book* (Headline, £14.99) delves into factual nooks and crannies the improved *Stones Bitter Rugby League Yearbook* (Hamlyn, £9.99) neglects, that forthright tome benefiting, however, from a new section on each club.

CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

Reflecting on partnerships

SHOW jumping used to be fun. Thirty years ago, riders jumped for honour and prestige. Horses, all unsponsored, had names such as Prince Hal, Stroller and Firecrest, with which the public could identify. The biggest competitions were glamorous spectacles, attracting large audiences.

Today, the sport is struggling to redefine its image in the face of waning popularity. This change in show jumping's fortunes is graphically illustrated in *Monkey Business*, the entertaining and moving memoirs of General Sir Cecil Blacker.

Few are more qualified to comment. In the late 1920s, "Monkey" as he was nicknamed in the army, was a member of the British show jumping team. Nearly two decades later, he became president of the British Show

Jumping Association and chairman of its selection committee.

Blacker's own equestrian ventures, which all had to be fitted around a full-time military career, were first centred on hunting and steeplechasing, his win in the 1954 Grand Military Cup on Pointsmen fulfilled an early aim.

It was a very different world that confronted him when he became chairman of the selection committee in 1976. Sponsorship now governed the sport. Horses with names such as Sanyo Music Centre had appeared. Riders spent the year chasing the richest prizes — sometimes, sadly, at the expense of their horses.

Though there were high points, such as the unexpected silver medal at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1984, Blacker noted the rising tide of commercialism within the

sport with dismay. "Horses have become tools, not friends and partners," he reflected when he stepped down from office in 1988. Blacker is a fluent and compelling writer, and writes with an obvious passion.

Few books are more visually appealing than Elizabeth Furr's *Visions of Show Jumping*. The outstanding collection of photographs, all taken by the author, punctuate a lively text which ranges from the art of course design to the key personalities in the sport. Original and informative, it is irresistible. *Monkey Business: The Memoirs of General Sir Cecil Blacker* (Quiller Press, £16.95); *Visions of Show Jumping* by Elizabeth Furr (Springfield Books Limited, £19.95).

JENNY MACARTHUR

مكتبة من الأصل

Cuts today, pain tomorrow

... ..



ROCK page 30
Boy George, at ease on stage as only a man who has been stared at most of his life could be

ARTS

BOOKS page 31
Classical no longer means just Greece and Rome. Now it's India, China and Persia as well



OPERA: A blazing *Gloriana* at the Leeds Grand Theatre, and chilling Philip Glass at the South Bank

Barstow reigns supreme

Rodney Milnes applauds a superb Opera North staging of one of Benjamin Britten's greatest operas

Each major new production of Britten's coronation opera — and Phyllida Lloyd's for Opera North at the Grand Theatre in Leeds is unquestionably a major production — marks a new stage towards defining the position of this troubled work in the canon. Each encounter brings a fresh perspective to bear on its initial rejection by a stuffy gala audience, and most of the press, 40 years ago.

It was surely not just because it was "naughty modern music": even in 1953 listeners who could respond to Walton's coronation marches, not to mention what was being played in concert halls, could take *Gloriana*. It cannot have been simply because the subject was "disrespectful": one of the problems of the piece is that the public scenes not only threaten to overwhelm the private concert, but are on a level of the monarchy with a troupe whose capriciousness might have made even Disraeli blush.

Of course, such considerations played their part, but it is a general hostility to Britten that lasted well into the 1960s, but I suspect that one aspect of the piece that stuck in people's throats, an aspect that Lloyd faces head on, was the relationship between an old woman and a young man. If the genders are reversed, nobody turns a hair — it is the very stuff of boulevard comedy — but even today the opposite is near-taboo, at least to judge from reports in the popular press.

This side of things, for reasons of casting apart from any others, was not stressed in the marvellous Sadler's Wells production by Colin Graham that did such sterling

service in the 1960s and 1970s and rehabilitated the work for my generation simply as a piece of musical theatre.

That process of rehabilitation is maintained in Leeds under the thrusting musical direction of Paul Daniel: the sheer vigour of the score, the technical brilliance, the bold, near-Verdian *coups de théâtre*, all combine to make *Gloriana* vie with *Peter Grimes* for the title of Britten's best opera.

The orchestral playing and choral singing on Saturday were splendidly disciplined, and the impact of the score in this ideal-sized theatre inescapably grand.

Gloriana must be daunting to a certain kind of producer in that there's not much you can "do" to it. I mean, play it in modern dress and the Bloody Tower would beckon all concerned. But Phyllida Lloyd simply concentrates on giving the private scenes their proper weight against the background of well-organised pageantry.

Anthony Ward's flexible permanent set of plain wooden walls, a gold surround and two gateways serves all the prescribed locations atmospherically thanks to Rick Fisher's lighting, and his period costumes are mainly sombre; the less sombre principals stand out vividly.

What makes the evening utterly memorable is Lloyd's collaboration with that extraordinary singing actress Josephine Barstow, who might have been born to sing *Gloriana*, and the casting of Thomas Randle as Essex. He is present, frankly, as a sex-object; before the Queen can decently effect the reconciliation between him and Mountjoy at the opening, he has to



Josephine Barstow might have been born to sing *Gloriana*. Her Essex, Thomas Randle, is a lusty, impetuous Essex boyo on the make

adjust his décolletage and get some more clothes on. A lusty, impetuous, long-haired boyo on the make — Essex man indeed — Randle is as far from Peter Pears as it is possible to get, and his singing is equally impetuous, yet engagingly shaped.

The interplay between Penelope Rich and Mountjoy (Susan Chilcott and Karl Morgan Daymond, who are both excellent) is also openly erotic, suggesting the normal emo-

tional responses from which the Queen has always been barred and throwing her scenes with Essex into sharp relief. Their brief physical contact in the second Lute Song and its aftermath is a piece of extremely subtle direction, faultlessly executed by both artists.

While Barstow's response to words and notes is throughout characteristically varied and inventive — like a schoolgirl gossiping

about the duel, ineffably regal in public, grotesque in her humiliation of Lady Essex (Vivienne Burnet, very touching), truly pathetic when, wigless, surprised by Essex — it is in the last scenes that she moves into top gear. The signing of Essex's death warrant, after a positively Donizettian cat-fight with the dark Penelope, is an epic moment: you see the very blood draining from her face and know you are looking

at a woman with no reason left for living. Sustaining that emptiness for once makes the controversial *mélodrame* finale truly the climax of the work. If I were to describe in words what happens at the end, it might sound corny; I can only say that in the theatre it stops the heart. In a performance such as this, *Gloriana* is unquestionably central to Britten's output, unquestionably a great opera.

Rise of the house of Wales

The Fall of the House of Usher
Queen Elizabeth Hall

DAMP and cold. Cold and damp. Damp and cold. The words of Edgar Allan Poe, the repeating, oscillating, repeating figures of the music of Philip Glass, and the chill of a December evening seeped into the bones at the South Bank.

Music Theatre Wales had come to the end of its autumn tour of Glass's chamber opera, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, which, in Michael McCarthy's masterful production, started life four years ago. London has seen it before, at the Union Chapel, Islington, a space very nearly as gothic and claustrophobic in effect as the tower-edge which forms the centre of Richard Aylin's single, dark set.

Everywhere it goes, the show plays to packed houses. And no wonder: for not only is this the great god Glass, but this is Glass meeting a writer who might have written expressly for him. "The years have eroded my soul," cries the melancholy protagonist, Roderick Usher, and Glass's endlessly repeating rhythmic patterns, mesmerically predictable harmonic lurches and electric melodic flares slowly begin to erode the nerves.

A knock at the door gives the cue for an obsessive percussive hammering at the psyche. The wordless vocalise of Roderick's twin sister/alter ego/lover is both a variant on Glass's own instrumental melismas and the voice of an age racked by the torment of its newly discovered sub-conscious.

This simple tale makes all too few demands on its audience. Yet it frees them to ponder, if they so wish, on psychological complexities. That possibility is encouraged by the wonderfully sophisticated production of Music Theatre Wales, slow and tactile in its small repertoire of spare, physical movement. In the fine playing of the company's instrumental ensemble under Michael Rafferty, Glass's textures part, mesh together again and part once more.

Tenor Julian Pike is totally compelling as the (self)-possessed Usher, Anne Margrethe Elkaas properly haunting as the rhapsodic, wordless Madeline, and Gwion Thomas, ardent and bewildered as the well-meaning but finally powerless friend, William.

HILARY FINCH

TELEVISION: Lynne Truss

Sound fare on screen

The big disappointment was the Shipping Forecast. The promise that the close-down to Saturday's special *Arena Radio Night* (BBC2 and Radio 4) would be "interactive" between television and the radio had somehow raised too high a hope. I was pathetically convinced that cameras had been sent to eek of the coastal stations. How I longed for a glimpse of that romantic item, the Channel Lightvessel Automatic.

Such thoughts the name conjures, here she floats abandoned y man amid tempestuous midnight seas (or doesn't — I have no idea). Her proud yellow beacon strokes the black horizon, her only company three regular strays of sharp salt spray against her glass. Oh yes inside her grey iron walls a sign of life remains savor a small heap of paperback an old circled calendar, a single slipper, a worn patch of paint at shoulder-height at the head of the galley stairs.

Well, I can't help it, that's what I think of. But what did BBC2 show us? A few library pictures of choppy seas, some pretty waiting underwater veg, a whale or so, and some fisherfolk. Comag as the last feature of a fun-and-a-half hour contest of the broadest media, here was the crowning evidence for that well-worn commonplace: radio definitely has the better pictures.

But the interactive evening was in other ways a triumph. "Anything you can do, I can do better," the T sang to the

Arena Radio Night
(BBC2/Radio 4)

radio. "No you can't," "Yes I can," "No you can't," "Yes I can," "No you can't," "Yes I can," "No you can't." Never before outside Disney animation have household appliances engaged in such a spirited duet. One's only fear was that, on making a quick dash to the kitchen for a sustaining cup of tea, one would discover one's fridge and microwave mooching companionably through. "Ah yes, I remember it well."

Paradoxically enough, the sound-only bits made the best television. In a feature on the human voice (much of it illustrated, mystifyingly, by a swimmer doing lengths), Jonathan Aitken's point about the 1960 presidential race — that if Kennedy had the looks, Nixon had the larynx — was simply and beautifully exemplified when the screen went blank.

But on the whole dark screens were too rare, too risky; even Alastair Cooke's five-minute voice-only spot was encumbered by images of Manhattan by night, studio dials, annotated scripts, and all that. By bringing the media together, *Arena Radio Night* still did a clever job of keeping them apart.

Personally, I loathed the larkily bickering characterisations — Peter Cook speaking for arrogant male television; Josie Lawrence impersonating sensitive female radio — but at least this device



Peter Cook: speaking for arrogant male television

kept constantly alive the issue of *la différence*.

Take Peter Kavanagh's play about a forgotten sound effects technician (*The Spot FX Man*). It worked well as visual drama — a buff-coated Peter Vaughan and his garret of gadgets — but you never forgot to ask yourself, "How would this come across as sound-only? Wouldn't the demise of the badge be more effective if you couldn't see it dead?"

The high points of the evening were programmes on sports commentating, TV thefts (the raiding of radio ideas), and the gruesomely familiar, abdic-inducing ritual of yesterday Sunday roasts, ingested to the sound of *The Navy Lark* and *Round the Horne*. Dammit, I had forgotten *Semprini Serenade* ("old ones, new ones"). Yet still I sympathised with the person in voice-over who said innocently: "That's still on, isn't it?"

What an excellent question. For in terms of both the ether and the folk memory, *Semprini Serenade* will never go off the air. In fact, it is probably playing right now aboard the Channel Lightvessel Automatic.

LONDON THEATRE: A date with a diary at Greenwich, and under surveillance in Islington

A decade ago Keith Waterhouse came up with the splendid wheeze of writing *Mrs Pooter's Diary*, to give her version of the comings and goings — and the Cummings and Gowing — in her husband's spectacularly ordinary life. Subsequently he staged a version that interwove the Grossmith Brothers' book with his own, and in this revival Patricia Routledge and Clive Swift play the devotedly domestic couple.

In their anxiety to cut respectable figures in the world, the Pooters resemble Hyacinth and Richard Bucket (pronounced bouquet), the characters Routledge and Swift play in the television series *Keeping Up Appearances*. But the Pooters were basically sweet-

Show pooters out

Mr and Mrs Nobody Greenwich

natured, and though Waterhouse feels that his Carrie Pooter is more waspish than the original, she is all buzz and no sting. So much sweetness, so many mild disputes mildly resolved, make for a cosy evening, and if cosiness is to your taste this play will meet your need for an uncontested Christmas.

Waterhouse's contribution to the original story is twofold. He supplies Mrs Pooter's gloss on events familiar from her husband's record: the mishap with the red enamel paint; the accidents that married her enjoyment of the Lord Mayor's ball. And he imagines

adventures, though rather small ones, that can slip into the gaps in the narrative. So he depicts her yearning to leave The Laurels, Brickfield Road, Holloway, and return to Peckham, though, of course, she can never mention this to her husband, for he would then include it in his diary, which he doesn't so this yearning just stops abruptly. Alexander McPherson's de-

sign, set against a roofscape of brick gables and slate roofs, shows us the Pooter parlour on two revolves. The cottage piano is the centrepiece of one revolve, and a black bureau in the Chinese style is the repository for Mrs Pooter's bonnets in the other revolve. Armchairs and a small table hurtle into position on rails. It is fun to watch this happening. Quite wrong, though, are the clouds of steam pouring through the open window whenever a train goes past the garden. The noise too; you would think that they lived in a tunnel.

Apart from this error, Matthew Francis's direction does

as well as possible with a tale that is really a score of short tales, creating a busy little world whose intricacies must be conveyed by only two speaking actors. Colleagues, tradesmen, even the ineffable son Lupin, are so much empty air.

Routledge is her decorous self, pointing her irony neatly but gurgling with fond laughter, which sounds quaint. Swift speaks his lines well and sounds pretty much as one might imagine a Pooter sounding. But the play lacks poignancy, lacks those outbursts of vexation and pique that give the book its comic vigour. After all, one cannot take umbrage against the vacant space.

JEREMY KINGSTON

An aid to stimulation

This promenade event, in which the multi-media company Blast Theory explores Aids and surveillance, is experimental art with a scientific side. Throughout, the spectators — a little like hospital patients, perhaps — are bombarded by technology. There are television monitors in corners. Projected computer graphics imitate fibre-optic journeys through the body.

A questionnaire puts the audience on the spot in the middle of the show: "Have you had an HIV antibody test? If the answer is 'yes', go and stand under the red light." Pronouncements come over the loudspeakers explaining DNA and cell-cloning, or ordering the actors about: "Get up. Lie down. Turn over."

At one point, a man playing an Aids victim tries to keep up with the commands, mirrored by a woman, way off, tossing and turning on a pile of

Chemical Wedding
Union Chapel, NI

scientific torques. He climbs in and out of a bed suspended from steel cords. It swings about in all directions like a pendulum in a kinetic sculpture, a pawn in a complex network of knock-on effects. The walls of his room — video projection screens — surround him in the swirl of psychedelic computer animation, adding to the feverish sense of nausea and powerlessness. Elsewhere, clips of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* flash up images of romance and violence. Simultaneously, the four performers (crewcut men and women) body-slam exhaustively. They push each other to the floor: possibly lovers, possibly killers.

Some sequences drag on self-indulgently. The audience,

having obligingly come in close when shepherded to do so, were left to watch two women simply bouncing on the spot until they ran out of steam. These two, being regrettably fit, were scarcely even out of breath by the time I was at the end of my tether, searching for my safety valve and wondering if I was a guinea pig in an experiment concerning boredom thresholds and British politeness. An added frustration was the under-amplified voice-over. Symbolic choreography without context can be obscure. Why was that man sticking little strips of gaffer tape on the floor while shouting "can you see him now?" The disco at the end seemed emotionally inappropriate, but at its best *Chemical Wedding* was stimulating, suggestive and energetic.

KATE BASSETT

"An evening of matchless theatre"

Markable...
"de force" Francis Time

PATRICK STEWART
in Charles Dickens' classic tale
A CHRISTMAS CAROL

16 Performances only! 28 Dec 93 - 8 Jan 94

OLD VIC Box Office/CC: 071 928 7618
CC: 071 487 8977 / 071 344 4444

Last-minute Christmas presents: the classics, detective stories and science fiction, children's books and paperbacks

Good bag of bloodsmiths

THERE was a stimulating surprise in the bagful of end-of-the-year anthologies. The *Picador Book of Crime Writing* (£14.99) is a revelation. Its entries have been imaginatively chosen by Michael Dibdin. His research and breadth of spirit has discovered a satisfying trove of the unexpected, the neglected and the unjustifiably obscure, including Chekhov, Zola, William Faulkner, Kafka and a poem by Auden, as well as the more obvious P.D. James, Rendell, Simonon, Highsmith and other premier leaguers. Inevitably there are extracts which cannot give a flavour of the full — by their nature, many tales of crime depend on accumulation. But Dibdin has usually chosen wisely enough to persuade the reader to want the whole.

Irish detective story writers do not come easily to mind. So here are a few names: James Joyce, Brendan Behan, William Trevor, Flann O'Brien, Elizabeth Bowen. Great Irish Detective Stories, edited and informatively introduced, individually, by Peter Haining (*Souvenir Press*, £14.99) is an exhilarating anthology of some extraordinary good writing. Like Michel Dibdin's selection, literary merit is the only criterion. I had not realised the excellence and scope of Irish writing in the genre.

2ND CULPRIT. The Official Crime Writers Association Annual, edited by Liza Cody and Michael Z. Lewin (*Chatto & Windus*, £11.99) assembles a score of short stories by the usual suspects (Antonia Fraser, Reginald Hill, Ellis Peters, Sue Grafton, Tony Hillerman and a clutch of equally eminent bloodsmiths). Eric Ambler re-reads his first novel after 50 years; and there are promising tales from a few unknowns, teasers and cartoons.

Constable New Crimes 2 (*Constable*, £14.99), edited by Maxim Jakubowski, leans towards the lesser known, but not lesser talented, with a partiality for American storytellers. The collection includes (English) Ju-

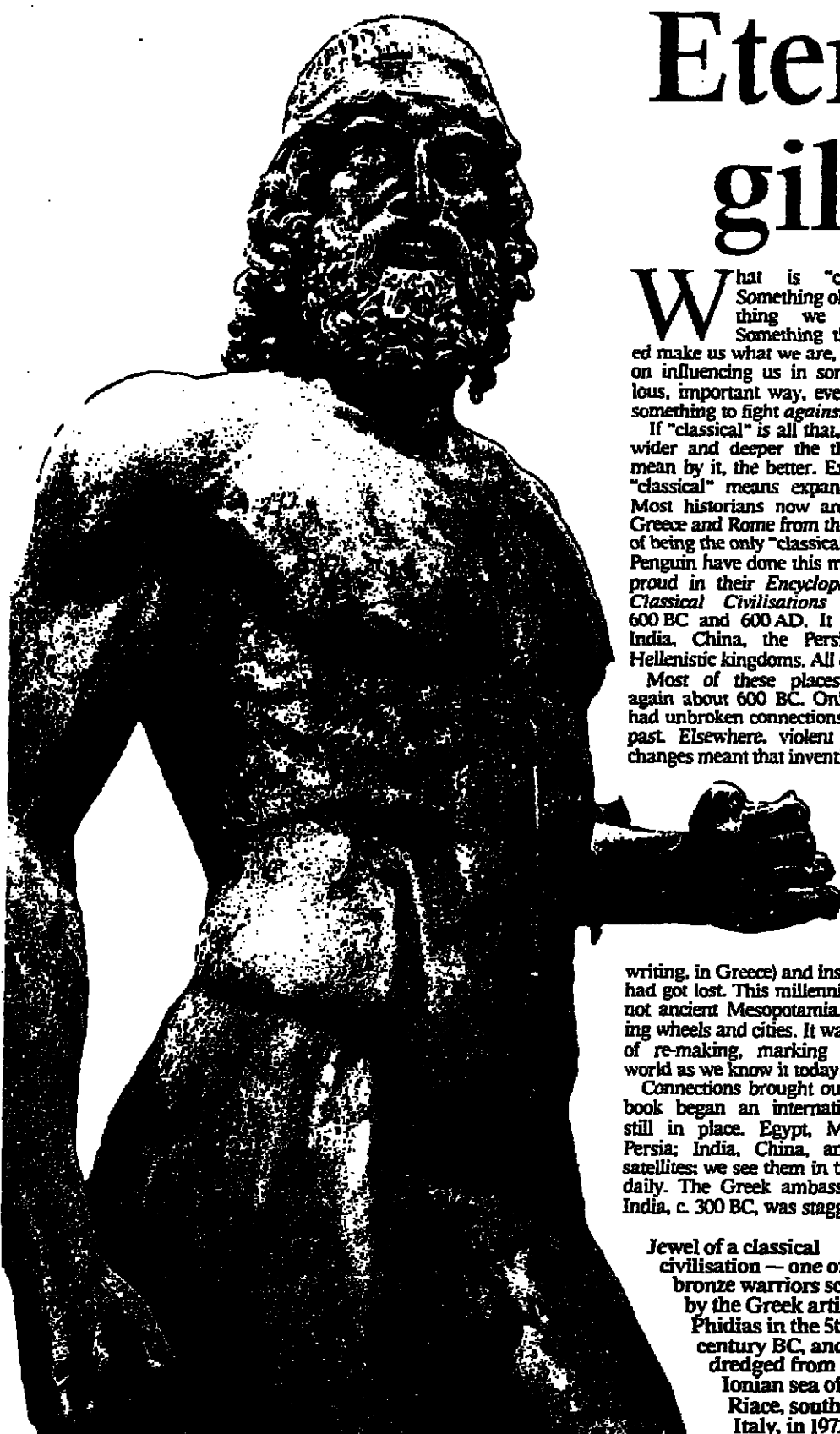
CRIME

lian Rathbone's subtly bizarre "Some Sunny Day", winner of the 1993 Crime Writers' Association prize for the best crime short story. Midwinter Mysteries 3, edited by Hilary Hale (*Little Brown*, £14.99) gathers its writers from the traditional wing, including Freeling, Keating, Nancy Livingston and Peter Lovesey, with only a small overlap with 2nd Culprit (in authors, not stories). This year, only Michael Z. Lewin manages to get into all three anthologies, only one of which he co-edits.

DENISE Danke has magnificently cornered the market in the crime of tomorrow's wizard technology. *Wink a Hopeful Eye* (*Macmillan*, £13.99) is about computer things called drama, which are so valuable that people kill and get killed for them, especially people around our spirited and sexy journo heroine Georgina Powers.

In *Ashes by Now* (*Gollancz*, £14.99) Mark Timlin's private eye, south London ex-cop Nick Sharman, reluctantly agrees to clear the name of an innocent petty flasher he had stitched up for rape and murder 12 years before. His client dies: Sharman starts getting interested, which means a whole lot of violence, humour, bad language, sleaze, sex, authentic atmosphere and very good writing. In *Dead Man Upright* (*Little Brown*, £15.99) Derek Raymond's obsessive, near-psychopathic, nameless detective from the police squad known only as the Factory, is called in to a north London house whose top floor tenant is possibly a serial killer of women. When Detective No-name investigates, there's usually a whole lot of violence, bad language, sleaze, sex, authentic atmosphere and very good writing. This time, there's a bit less of the sex 'n' violence and signs that No-name is becoming less tormented and unstable.

MARCEL BERLINS



Eternal summer gilds them yet

What is "classical"? Something old? Something we admire? Something that helped make us what we are, and goes on influencing us in some nebulous, important way, even if only something to fight against? If "classical" is all that, then the wider and deeper the things we mean by it, the better. Expanding "classical" means expanding us. Most historians now are freeing Greece and Rome from the burden of being the only "classical" things. Penguin have done this movement proud in their *Encyclopaedia of Classical Civilisations* between 600 BC and 600 AD. It takes in India, China, the Persian and Hellenistic kingdoms. All classical. Most of these places started again about 600 BC. Only China had unbroken connections with its past. Elsewhere, violent political changes meant that inventions (like

Ruth Padel

THE PENGUIN
ENCYCLOPAEDIA
OF CLASSICAL
CIVILISATIONS
Edited by Arthur Cotterell
Viking, £20

THE OXFORD
HISTORY OF
CLASSICAL ART
Edited by John Boardman
OUP, £35

PTOLEMY OF EGYPT
By Walter M. Ellis
Routledge, £30

THE EMPEROR
CONSTANTINE
By Michael Grant
Weidenfeld, £20

the absence of slavery. The cross-bow, a Chinese invention, was ignored by the West and stayed in south Asia for another millennium, making things less bloody for the Ptolemies and Macedonians. Law, codes, philosophies, paper-making, steel-working, imperial administration: all this and more, set in the context of each civilisation, and in relationship to the wider world. Wonderful stuff, with one chance missed. Let's hope the next edition will give us an essay on Jewish civilisation as deep and interesting as the others, and fill out further our proper vision of classical.

Oxford lets the side down here. The *Oxford History of Classical Art* assumes classical is "the 5th and 4th centuries BC" and does not bother to say "in Greece". It chases the principles of this art through to Rome (I particularly liked the Later Roman Empire) and later ("Diffusion"). Each epoch gets a scholarly outline, backed by lovely photographs and useful notes. Classical coffee-table.

Ptolemy was a Macedonian soldier. He got Egypt when Alexander died and founded a Greek dynasty there, making Alexandria the cultural and scientific wonder of the world. Walter M. Ellis, an indepen-

dent-minded scholar, has now filled a gap with *Ptolemy of Egypt*. He has a fresh, fair way with controversies which have political echoes today — the dispute among ancient Greeks as to whether Macedonians were Greek, for instance (Ellis thinks they were, but had an ambiguous relation to Greeks, like the Cornish to Britain, and did not think much of the mess Greeks made of ruling themselves before Macedon took over).

More widely, the *Black Athena* argument implies there was nothing special about European, Greek-tinged culture. Greece took it all from Egyptian and Asian models. Ellis is balanced about this. European historians did indeed try to justify imperialism (and racism) when they showed Hellenism "civilising" Egypt. Egypt was "civilised" long before, as the ancient Greeks themselves knew. Ptolemy did not fuse races, or Hellenise Egypt. He thought Greek culture a good thing, but got native Egyptians' cooperation, and ensured their civilisation and religion continued.

Ptolemaic Egypt became a unique blend of cultures and religions. Not because Ptolemy was wise and good; he had no ear for human rights, and native Egyptians and Jews were second-class citizens. But he saw how to keep power. No one else, at the time, was any better. This is a lovely bit of work. A light touch, with lots of hard work and thought behind it.

Constantine, first Christian Emperor, is another soldier-politician with "a lot to answer for". Michael Grant is a master populariser who reads the scholarship. *The Emperor Constantine* shows you where fences are and he often sits on them, but comes down from them at the end. Constantine murdered people, including his eldest son and second wife. "There is no excuse for those deaths, at any time or in any society..." Grant writes. "It is a travesty to call such a murderer Constantine the Great. Or perhaps not: for what does greatness mean?" Lively, methodical. Grant pulls you into his story and brings out the issues clearly.

William Gibson takes science fiction to the edge, and over. Cyberpunk in manner, he's a rare celebrant of the morals-parched world to come, embracing it with a gleeful ferocity of style. No depressive he, about the future. *Virtual Light* (*Viking*, £14.99) elatedly tells it as it is for what is to be — his most sustainedly comic and terrifying novel so far.

The paths of rent-a-cop Rydell and girl-courier Chevettie squirm and wriggle through the technocentrals of northern and southern California, before converging on the matter of a pair of sunglasses which constitute a virtual reality system unto themselves. That reality is one sought by other agents, notably the California-ruling com-

pany from the Pacific Rim. Both Rydell and Chevettie, for all their Chandleresque tough talk, make an endearing pair of innocents at large, while the bizarre characters glimpsed on the progress towards truth have a chunky deliberation as though slow-motioned to make them more vivid in the accelerated world they inhabit.

As an involving read it is remarkably exhilarating, as comment on the future where "modernity is dying" Gibson takes us as up close as we want to be. We hurry over the edge with him at our peril. Jack Womack looks to the same

apocalyptic future as Gibson — and despairs. Proceeded by a series of electric jolts, as though in narrative fits, his *Random Acts of Violence* (*HarperCollins*, £14.99) erects a video-tombstone for civilisation, lit by flashes of blue lightning. Lola Hart is the nice, middle-class girl, suddenly shifted from the haves to the have-nots. In an America where five presidents are assassinated in one year, she finds herself, with her family, at gutter-level. The story of a personal decline and fall mirrors the more general collapse. The only consolation comes from Womack's neon prose. It is enough to light

SCIENCE FICTION

up a world gone dark and mad.

Tom Holt's *Here Comes The Sun* (*Orbit*, £14.99) is more cheerful. His story of an awry universe being sorted out by an eccentric group of characters as ever howled at a blue moon is a mix of Terry Pratchett and Thorne Smith. With something, inherently buoyant, all its own. Thank the Lord!

You invert the definition of "parable" for Green Mars by Kim Stanley Robinson (*HarperCollins*, £14.99): it's a heavenly story with an

earthly meaning. The second leg of the substantial tripod straddling these new Martian chronicles, it's a metaphor for humanity's problems. The first, *Red Mars*, revealed a colonisation rent apart by revolution: here the planet is buffeted by market forces and losing its ecological balance by being sold off. For all its unwieldy plotting, it still has a massive grip that makes it as compelling as it is worthy.

Powers That Be by Anne McCaffrey and Elizabeth Ann Scarborough (*Bantam*, £14.99) has an exit-line culled from the film *Some Like It Hot* and some

comically laughable dialogue. Yet its story of the convalescing Major Yana — surveying a mystery world of terraformed ice and snow — will have its addicts set on a fix of two love between life-forms. Its heart is so embazoned on its sleeve, it's even likable.

Undoubtedly, the title of Isaac Asimov's *Caliban* by Roger MacBride Allen (*Millennium*, £14.99/£8.99 pbk) is a cash-in on the name of the good doctor. But, not a rip-off. Allen, it seems, discussed the idea of a new kind of robot with Asimov before the great man died.

The result is a mechanical with a gravitronic brain, able to think through the three ethical laws imposed on robots by Asimov: it's as much of a shock to the Spacers and Settlers, among whom the amnesiac Caliban takes refuge, as to Asimov adherents. As a creature of invention the concept always mirrored humanity founded on apartheid and slavery; it is an invention of creatures very like itself with quandaries and quests. In taking up the great idea, Mr Allen has all the weighty authority of a man aware of his responsibilities — and being readable is first and foremost among them. That he certainly is. Asimov would have been proud.

TOM HUTCHINSON

TURKEY WITH TRIMMINGS

LONDON
Globe Theatre
Absolute Turkey
January 5
FELICITY Kendal and Griff Rhys-Jones head the cast in Peter Hall's production of Feydeau's comedy of marital high jinks, with designs by renowned cartoonist Gerald Scarfe. See the show with the Theatre Club for £23 and to meet the cast over a glass of wine afterwards. Tel 071-494 5067.
Coliseum Theatre
English National Opera
The Two Widows
December 23 & 30
SMETANA'S comedy about love in the middle years draws on the same folk traditions as his most famous work, *The Bathers*. Tickets are £31.50 (normally £39.50) in the stalls, £24.50 and £17.50 (£29 in the Upper Circle. Tel 071-836 3161).
Christmas Eve treats
December 24
WE have great savings at five shows in the West End. *She Stoops to Conquer* at Queen's Theatre, 3pm. £22 tickets reduced to £10. Tel 071-494 5041.
Blood Brothers at Phoenix Theatre, 2pm. £15 (normally £23). Tel 071-367 1044.
Hot Stuff at Cambridge Theatre, 3pm. £10 (normally £20). Tel 071-494 5080.
Jane Eyre at Playhouse Theatre, 3pm. £10 (normally £20). Tel 071-839 4401.
Travels with My Aunt at Whitehall Theatre, 3pm. £10 (normally £20). Tel 071-867 1119.
EDINBURGH
Royal Lyceum
Cinderella
Dec 24 and 31, 2.30pm & 7pm

THE THEATRE CLUB

A HILARIOUS adaptation of *Cinderella* written by and starring Forbes Masson. Two tickets for the price of one (normally £2.50-£12.50). Tel 031-229 9697.
LIVERPOOL
Playhouse
Annie
Jan 5 & 10, 7.30pm
SEE this ever-popular musical, based on the 1920s comic strip about little orphan Annie, for £9 (normally £14). Tel 0242 572573.
TO book for any of this week's special offers telephone the listed number during normal office hours. The price of the ticket you receive is the special price negotiated on members' behalf by the Theatre Club.
To join the Theatre Club either send a cheque for £12.50, made payable to The Theatre Club, together with your name, address and telephone number to The Theatre Club, PO Box 2164, Colchester CO1 1GN or telephone 0206 41662 during office hours using your credit card. Apply before December 31 and you will receive a bonus of 50 free Air Miles.
Please allow 28 days for delivery for your membership pack but, if you want to give club membership as a Christmas present please state this and we will try to issue the pack in time. For general inquiries please telephone 071-387 9673.

PAPERBACKS

THE GREAT MELODY
By Conor Cruise O'Brien
Minerva, £8.99
Edmund Burke is among the few historical figures who attract politicians and intellectuals in equal measure. This is the book to read on him. Like Burke, O'Brien is an original thinker who inspires admiration and detestation on both sides of the Irish Sea. There is an autobiographical subtext in this vast, passionate, intelligent *Thematic Biography*, which proves how very Irish Burke always remained.

BLACK LAMB AND GREY FALCON
By Rebecca West
Canongate Classics, £9.99
West travelled extensively in Yugoslavia during the 1930s and she wrote together in one great tapestry her experience of the three journeys she made. It is hard to convey the flavour of a volume so rich in observation, history, philosophy, political ideas and ironic humour. West is always alive to the tensions that simmer below the surface, and full of digressions which are extraordinary but never boring.

ANCESTRAL VOICES
By Edna van Heerden
Alison & Busby, £5.99
How did little Noah die? The magistrate has come to Toorberg, in South Africa's Eastern Cape, to investigate a death, and is given a dozen different stories, for among the Moolman family myth, superstition and voices from the past are far more potent than elusive truth, and the drought-ridden veld itself a powerful character. Exquisite prose and an oblique and moving portrait of a lonely man from the distinguished Afrikaans writer.

Contributors: Daniel Johnson, Hazel Leslie, Sue Gee



O come ye to Docklands

Susan Hill has done the Dickens of a job on this little Christmas carol, *King of Kings*, illustrated by John Lawrence (*Walker Books*, £3.99). Her setting is the last of Docklands: Trafalgar Street, on the edge of old wharves and new building-sites. Her hero is widowed Mr Hegarty (honourably attended by dog Jack), living in the house where he had always lived and not liking to think about the emptying streets around him. There is much care, and much affection, in this tiny unsentimental bit of portrai-

CHILDREN

ture, and that becomes important as the events of the story unfold. For Mr Hegarty is awakened early on Christmas morning by an unfamiliar mewling sound, carried from the churchyard on a chill wind; and when he and Jack go to investigate they find themselves entering a Christmas legend newly writ. The dangers of a maudlin outcome are manifest, but the simplicity of the storytelling, the watchful regard for under-

BRIAN ALDERSON

NIPPERS' CHECKLIST: GOOD GIFTS FOR FORGETFUL FATHERS

Child's Christmas in Wales by Dylan Thomas, illustrated by Edward Ardizzone (*Orion*, £4.50)
Rocking Horse Rhymes illustrated by Charles Folkard (*Orion*, £2.99)
The Orchard Book of Magical Tales retold by Margaret Mayo, illustrated by Jane Ray (*Orchard*, £12.99)
Simpkin by Quentin Blake (*Jonathan Cape*, £7.99)
The Three Little Wolves and

the Big Bad Pig by Eugene Trivizas, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury (*Heinemann*, £9.99)
The Mardi Gras Cat by Naomi Lewis, illustrated by Paul Stagg (*Heinemann*, £9.99)
Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the "Iliad" by Rosemary Sutcliffe, illustrated by Alan Lee (*Frances Lincoln*, £12.99)
We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy by Mau-

rice Sendak (*HarperCollins*, £9.99)
Hob and the Goblins by William Moyne, chapter initials by Norman Messenger (*Dorling Kindersley*, £8.99)
Time and the Clockwork Cuckoo by Peter Dickinson, illustrated by Emma Chichester-Clark (*Doubleday*, £9.99)
Pied Piper by Robert Brown- ing, illustrated by Kate Greenaway (*Everyman Children's Classics*, £7.99)



"A Christmas Carol represents an ongoing argument with himself, as well as with a selfish society"

Nicholas Tucker investigates the continuing popularity of Dickens' most famous novel. In *The TES*.

OUT THIS FRIDAY

TES

THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT
SHIP THROUGH NEWSAGENTS EVERY FRIDAY

Employers more optimistic on New Year job prospects

By Philip Bassett
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

EMPLOYERS are more confident about job prospects for the New Year, according to a survey published today.

The findings of the survey are in line with the growth in optimism about jobs among ministers after last week's further fall in unemployment — the third successive month of better news.

In what it claims to be the first jobs survey in the industrial sector since Kenneth Clarke delivered the Budget last month, Manpower, the employment service agency, said prospects are improving.

Though the overall balance — those reporting a decline against those registering an increase — of companies is still negative on employment, with a balance of 3 per cent saying jobs will be cut, Manpower says the figure is "significantly" more optimistic than at this time last year.

Employment expectations tend to weaken at this time of the year, and many employees, companies and trade unions are braced for a further round of redundancies once the festive season is over.

The minus 3 per cent figure compares with the minus 16 per cent forecast by the survey for the first quarter of 1993, which was followed by a round of job losses. Manpower says the latest survey offers the "most hopeful forecast for the first quarter since 1990".

The survey, of almost 2,000 leading employers, shows a significant reversal in job prospects in the South, as do



Lilian Bennett, of Manpower, says the seasonal downturn in jobs optimism is less acute than in recent years

Government figures. In the South, a balance of 11 per cent are forecasting an increase in jobs, compared with a balance of 12 per cent in the region predicting a fall a year ago. Though employers in London are still forecasting job losses, with a balance of minus 3 per cent — in line with the national average — the figure is a marked improvement on the 19 per cent balance of employers predicting job cuts in the

capital a year ago. But although official unemployment is falling in all regions of the country, nine out of the 12 regions surveyed by Manpower remain pessimistic about jobs, with the North West the most negative.

Sectorally, manufacturing and the public sector are more optimistic about employment than they were a year ago. However, a net balance of 8 per cent of service sector firms

forecasting job losses compares with 13 per cent predicting an increase in jobs in the final three months of this year.

Again in line with the Government's figures, confidence is also growing in the banking sector. While a balance of minus 4 per cent are still predicting job losses, the figure compares with the minus 36 per cent for the first quarter of 1993.

Lilian Bennett, who chairs

Manpower, said: "As expected, the usual seasonal downturn for the first quarter is shown by the figures. However, it is significantly less acute than in recent years and 1994 shows the most optimistic first quarter forecast since 1990."

She added that Manpower is beginning to notice skill shortages in some areas — a further sign that the recession may be lifting further.

Strong race for best performing share award

By Martin Barrow

CONTENDERS have set a cracking pace in the best performing share category of the annual Coopers & Lybrand plc awards, held in association with *The Times*.

The strong performance of the stock market in the second half of the year has triggered a revival of interest in shares in smaller companies, with dramatic results.

By the end of the third quarter of the year, shares in nine companies showed increases in excess of 400 per cent and 20 in excess of 280 per cent.

So far, the best performing shares are French Connection, with a 517 per cent rise, Banner Homes, up 493 per cent, and Gresham Computing, up 467 per cent. They are followed closely by Osprey Communications, with a rise of 460 per cent, Comag, up 447 per cent, and Lincoln House, up 443 per cent.

Nominations are being sought in the categories of smaller company fund manager of the year, new company of the year, entrepreneur of the year, company of the year, and best annual report.

Awards will be presented in March at the annual dinner at London's Grosvenor House Hotel, which will be attended by more than 1,000 people.

Graham Cole, corporate finance partner at Coopers & Lybrand, is again responsible for organising the dinner.

He said: "This is the first time I have had to open a waiting list, and confirms the event is now established as a traditional fixture in the City diary."

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Daimler shareholders vote on reserves plan

SHAREHOLDERS in Daimler-Benz will today vote on a proposal that it should distribute DM10 billion from reserves. An extraordinary shareholders meeting is being asked to approve the dismantling of a defensive arrangement created almost 20 years ago. Mercedes Holding, which owns 25.23 per cent of Daimler and was set up to prevent hostile takeovers, is being merged with Daimler through a one-for-one share swap. Mercedes Holding has declared a DM14.92 dividend, drawing on reserves that it no longer needs.

Shareholders are asked to approve the distribution of about DM10 billion of Daimler reserves, giving shareholders tax credits worth about DM2.7 billion. To help offset the reserves drain, a two-for-one rights is planned to raise at least DM4.7 billion when the Mercedes Holding merger is complete.

Coal signs supply deal

BRITISH Coal has signed a £100 million supply deal with Coalite, the smokeless fuel manufacturer. The five-year agreement, announced today, is for 2.5 million tonnes of coal, which will go to Coalite's manufacturing plants at Grimethorpe, South Yorkshire, and Boleston, Derbyshire. In addition to the Coalite deal, British Coal has secured contracts in the industrial market representing 2.5 million tonnes of annual sales.

Call to re-target exports

BUSINESSES should target high growth markets outside Europe to help close Britain's trade gap, said David Kern, chief economist at National Westminster Bank. Focusing on Asia, Latin America and North America was vital over the next few years if Britain was to grab a bigger share of world exports. He said: "UK exports are relatively unrepresented in the most rapidly growing international trading regions, most notably East Asia outside Japan."

Hungary telecom deal

A CONSORTIUM of Deutsche Bundespost Telekom and Ameritech has won East Europe's biggest privatisation tender for Matav, the Hungarian telecommunications company. The consortium is to pay £587 million for 30 per cent of the Matav share capital and the national concession to provide telephone services. Dr Gyorgy Schamschula, minister for communications, said: "The concession agreement requires Matav to meet rapid annual development targets."

REPORTING THIS WEEK

Companies ready for break

AS the Christmas holiday approaches, this week will see a significant slowdown in the number of companies reporting as the City looks forward to the festivities.

TODAY

Analysts will be looking for some signs of a revival in the housing market when Fletcher King, the estate agent and surveyor, reports first half results.

Its profits have fallen every year since 1989 when they peaked at £2.88 million and the total dividend was 10.6p. Profits for the year to April 30 were £220,000. Some recovery is expected in the interim results from last year's £100,000.

Interims: BBS Design Group, British Thomson, EFM Japan Trust,

Fletcher King, Gold Greenlees Trot, Ivory & Sims. Finals: None planned. Economic statistics: UK national accounts, balance of payments.

TOMORROW

Eurotherm, the electronics group best known for temperature control equipment, should report an advance in full-year profits as cost-cutting and restructuring measures offset difficult economic conditions and the lack of recovery in the group's UK and European markets, with Germany particularly dull.

Final pre-tax profits are expected to climb to £19.9 million compared with £14.6 million last time, according to NatWest Securities. Market forecasts range from £18.5 million to £20 million.

The dividend is predicted to rise to 9.3p (8p).

The reporting season for the privatised utilities trickles to an end with results from Wessex Water.

The Bristol-based group is expected to turn in first half pre-tax profits ahead of £53.3 million (£44 million), according to Barclays de Zoete Wedd. Market forecasts range from £52 million to £55 million. BZW predicts an increased interim dividend of 7.8p (7.16p last time).

Bespak, which makes plastic valves, pumps and precision mouldings for the health market, and recently issued a profits warning, is expected to announce disappointing interim results.

Pre-tax profits in the six months to October 31 are forecast to halve to £2.5 million compared with £5 million, according to UBS. However,

the group is expected to maintain its interim dividend at 4p. Interims: Bespak, Faupel Trading Group, Foreign & Colonial Small, Forminstar, I & S Optimum Income Trust, Jones & Shipman, Mosale Investments, Novo Group, Wessex Water. Finals: Balleys, Eurotherm, TR High Income Trust. Economic statistics: Trade figures - Non-EU (November).

WEDNESDAY

Interims: ERF (Holdings), Phoenix Timber. Finals: Abbey Panels Investments.

THURSDAY

Interims: Danie Inv Trust, Finals: Kelsey Industries, C A Sparrill.

FRIDAY

Interims: None scheduled. Finals: None scheduled.

PHILIP PANGALOS

Randall stake for Hambro Magan

HAMBRO Magan, the corporate finance adviser, is set to announce today that it has bought a significant minority stake in the Randall Group, the Lloyd's independent adviser (Sarah Bagnall writes).

One of the largest tasks undertaken by the group was an investigation into the extensive use of time and distance reinsurance policies by the Gooda Walker syndicates.

The 200-page report concluded that hundreds of Lloyd's names were attracted to join the syndicates because of profits that had been significantly boosted by the use of the policies. Ken Randall, chief executive of Randall and the writer of the report, handed it to the Serious Fraud Office.

CHANGE ON WEEK

THE POUND

US dollar
1.4913 (-0.0032)
German mark
2.5409 (+0.0040)
Exchange index
81.6 (+0.1)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share
2505.3 (+45.6)
FT-SE 100
3337.1 (+75.8)
New York Dow Jones
3751.57 (+10.9)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave
18051.91 (+794.48)

City split over goodwill accounting reform

By Graham Searjeant, Financial Editor

LEADING City share analysts want reforms made to the way companies account for goodwill — the excess of purchase costs over adjusted book assets — during takeovers and acquisitions.

A survey conducted by Price Waterhouse, the firm of accountants, has found that leading stockbrokers are as divided as the Accounting Standards Board over what reforms should be made. But almost all stressed the need for "transparency", wanting companies to give more information so that analysts can make their own judgments.

Mary Keegan, technical partner of Price Waterhouse, said: "I believe the single most important message from this key group, who between them represent the advice most sought after by institutional investors, is that the thing they want to see, above all else, is transparency."

Of the 20 analysts polled in telephone interviews this month, 14 said they cared what the ASB decided and many thought that clarifying the existing haphazard treatment would improve their advice to markets.

Miss Keegan said: "People are worrying about it. We need to get a clear steer about where we are going, have a system that we can have confidence in and pay close attention to what the users of accounts want."

Half of the analysts polled believe that changing present practice, far from being an arcane accounting technicality, will alter the way company managements behave, making them rethink their attitudes to takeovers and

acquisitions and the prices they can afford to pay.

Miss Keegan said: "As respondents recognise, the future treatment of goodwill is likely to dictate acquisition strategies. That affects both efficiency and jobs."

Half the respondents — all leading analysts named in the 1993 Extel Survey across a variety of sectors — consider the present method, under which goodwill is usually

the immediate write-off as the norm. A further 20 per cent favour immediate write-offs, but with an option of applying instead continuing tests for permanent impairment to value, which would be charged against profits.

Marginally more favour goodwill being retained initially in the balance sheet as the norm. Among these, 35 per cent want systematic annual amortisation of goodwill and 15 per cent say goodwill should only be written down when there has been a permanent diminution of value, the solution most favoured by companies during the last great debate in 1990. One said: "I would prefer goodwill to be evaluated regularly like other assets, rather than diminished."

City analysts, therefore, seem to be divided into two camps, and on roughly similar lines to members of the ASB. These lines reflect the divisions that deadlocked earlier debates. The two compromise options put by the ASB might also fall foul of analysts' worries: that there should be consistency, which does not needlessly mix up profit and loss account and balance sheet, and should make international comparison of companies easier by following an accepted international accounting standard.

Price Waterhouse also found some cynicism about how companies would react. "They will always find a way," said one analyst. "If you close one door, they open another — usually a trap door through which the investor falls."



Keegan: seeks clear steer

written off against reserves straight away without being charged against profits, is workable if imperfect. A quarter think it is too simplistic and three analysts, equivalent to 15 per cent, thought it grossly misleading. Four out of five argued that, if the status quo were retained, far more detail would be given in annual reports about cumulative write-offs, including their main dates. Even so, only 25 per cent favoured retaining

"Adaptation, growth and accomplishment."

PROFESSOR COLIN CAMPBELL • THE VICE CHANCELLOR

This year has been one of adaptation and development within a highly competitive higher education environment. Against this background Nottingham followed a clear and consistent policy of pursuing academic excellence whilst reaching out to secure a broadly based contact with many sections of business and the community.

Amongst the many achievements of which the University is justly proud are:

Research: A Balanced Portfolio

The year confirmed Nottingham's claim to be one of Britain's foremost research universities. 93% of academic staff were confirmed as working in departments carrying out research deemed to be of national or international importance.

"The University of Nottingham's reputation for research excellence is recognised throughout my Department", John Patten, Secretary of State for Education, speaking at the opening of a new laboratory unit in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, September 1993.

Teaching: Innovation for Excellence

The creation of the new post of Director of Teaching Quality Enhancement demonstrates the University's recognition of the importance of providing its students with a teaching and learning experience of high quality.

Nottingham has taken a firm lead in national initiatives to make major changes to curricula and was one of the first universities to introduce a modular structure for its degree courses.

Healthcare: A Better Lifestyle for a Region

Integration has been the keynote not only within the Medical Faculty's own courses but also in its relations with the NHS Trusts and other medical units in the city and region.

Some 160 GPs have agreed to take part in a teaching programme involving a large section of the community in Nottingham in the process of educating these future doctors. It is the most far reaching exercise of its kind in the U.K.

Student Viewpoint: A Proud Achievement

Careful budgeting has allowed a major refurbishment programme and the provision of a wider range of student services than ever before.

The number of volunteers working in the Community Action programme reached an historic high of nearly 2000 students.

The Union is healthy and remains so because the students care about it.

Cultural Life: Educating and Entertaining

The £5 million Arts Centre is now almost fully funded thanks to more than £3 million of donations.

The past year saw nearly 70 concerts embracing a range of styles and origins. As well as enriching the cultural life of the city, the University's School of Music is a centre of teaching and research excellence. In the recent research assessment exercise the School received a top category grade 5 rating.

The year saw the Arts Centre exhibit the unique Newcastle collection of family portraits. The finest works in this bequest to the University are now permanently displayed on campus.

People: A Year of Honours

The year saw the installation of Sir Ron Dearing CB as the new Chancellor and Knighthoods for Professors David Hull (Child Health), Peter Mansfield (Physics) and John Smith (Law).

A Sound Financial Base

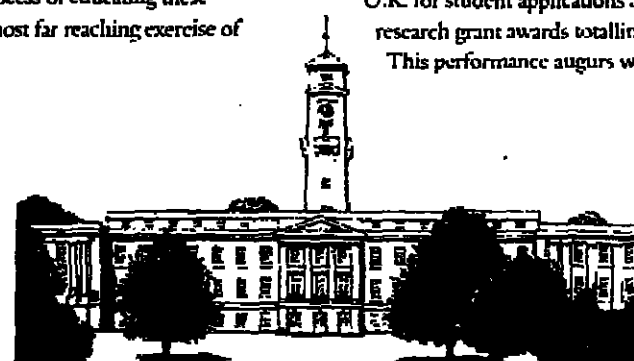
The University has had another financially successful year. Total income increased in real terms from £115.8 million to £127.6 million. This was thanks in particular to large increases in research grants and contracts and the provision of other services — a creditable achievement during a period of recession.

Nottingham has the greatest degree of financial strength of any multi faculty U.K. university as shown by the Financial Health Indicators published nationally by the CVCP.

Future Prospects

Nottingham is the most popular University in the U.K. for student applications and received record new research grant awards totalling £29 million.

This performance augurs well for the future.



Copies of the Annual Report available from the Public Affairs and Information Office
The University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD
Telephone: (0602) 515759 Fax: (0602) 515733

Power over oil market seeps through Opec's fingers

Carl Mortished traces the fall of the price of oil to \$14 a barrel and says the Middle East is no longer in a position to dictate terms to the West

When politicians blame speculators for collapsing currencies and prices, a good rule of thumb is to assume that the market was right, the ministers wrong and the policy about to change. Britain and her European allies learnt this lesson at enormous cost in September 1992 and the ensuing collapse of the ERM was blamed by Jacques Delors on currency speculators. Just over a year later, a very different cartel called Opec has been raising similar howls of protest over the collapse in the oil price.

Over the past two weeks, oil futures traders in London and New York have been selling Brent crude aggressively, and Opec, the organisation that was once credited with putting the nail in the coffin of cheap energy, appears to be floundering. A combination of slower growth in demand from the developed world, the collapse of the former Soviet Union and rising oil production has sent crude prices slumping to below \$14 per barrel, reaching a five-year low of \$13.27, less than a fortnight ago.

The prospect of oil prices sinking as far as \$10 a barrel, a level last reached in 1986, has provoked cries of alarm and allegations by Opec that the market had become a casino, describing traders as "kids left in charge of a candy store".

But the pain of lower revenues from oil has yet to stir it into effective action. Opec, the usual focus of attention in the boom and bust of the crude oil cycle, has failed so far to come up with a solution. The market mood at London's International Petroleum Exchange is bearish, and some technical analysts reckon the crude oil price could touch single figures before rebounding. Few doubt that the price will eventually rise as demand for energy increases with economic recovery but the market is currently driving it down in the face of Opec reluctance to make production cuts.

Lindsay Horn, executive director with Lehman Brothers, a major trader in oil futures, believes that Opec is suffering from its success in manipulating supply in the 1970s and 1980s, driving the price up. The prospect of better returns sent oil companies into an exploration frenzy, boosting production levels as the world sought to exploit the economic rent from selling oil. To cope with the danger of being held hostage to further supply problems, a futures market was created enabling companies to hedge their exposure to sudden price movements.

Today, security of supply and fear of disruption is no longer an issue with American tanks and planes in the Gulf. What's wrong with Opec is that they are living in the past," he said.

"What has happened is that there is no longer any Opec price. Opec has handed over its pricing responsibility to the futures market and the tail is wagging the dog."

Inaction at Opec's last meeting at the end of November was in part responsible for the recent price collapse and some observers believe that the market is trying to force the cartel to hold emergency talks in January, before its scheduled meeting on March 25. Timing is critical to any decision to cut production: Opec does not want to make an early token gesture towards



A major cause of Opec's troubles is an increase in non-Opec output

reducing the supply line only to be forced into further cuts by a determinedly bearish futures market. Saudi Arabia is the largest Opec producer with a production quota of 8 million barrels per day and its clout means that the rest of the 12-member cartel look to it for leadership in any attempt to limit production and stop a price fall from turning into a rout.

But the kingdom has failed to take the lead by offering to cut volumes and other Opec members, fearful of losing market share, are extremely unlikely to take the initiative. Jealousy over market share is behind most of the dithering of Opec members, who are keenly aware of the possibility that sanctions on Iraq may be lifted at some time, an event that could require downward adjustment to the Opec production ceiling of 24.5 million barrels.

A major cause of Opec's troubles has been a surprise increase in non-Opec production. New fields are coming on stream in the North Sea, lifting output by half a million barrels this year and, according to the Centre for Global Energy Studies (CGES), non-Opec production, excluding the former Soviet Union, has increased by 1

million barrels a day to 32 million since November 1992.

At the same time, a hoped-for reduction in oil exports from the former Soviet Union has failed to materialise. The creaking infrastructure of the Siberian and Central Asian oil industry is pumping out a diminishing flow of crude: volumes have declined from 11.5 million bpd in 1990 to 7.8 million bpd in 1993, according to the end of November report by the International Energy Agency. At the same time, however, economic slump has reduced internal demand for fuel, leaving the former Soviet bloc a consistent net exporter of some 2 million barrels a day over the last three years, and likely to continue at similar levels.

The CGES reckons that Opec has the option to go for an early production cut and risk market share or accept the cake. Cutting production could mean a long-term loss of market share, says the CGES, because there is little sign that non-Opec producers regard the current price as a problem and any withdrawal of the cartel from the

market would only encourage more non-Opec production. "Sustainable oil prices now lie in the \$10 to \$15 per barrel rather than the \$15 to \$20 per barrel range," it concludes. Failure to agree to any belt-tightening among themselves has not stopped Opec members from urging others to reduce production, with the finger firmly pointed at the cartel's favourite bogymen, the North Sea producers. But the only response has been close to home where Oman, a small non-member of the cartel producing 800,000 barrels a day, recently took the lead and announced a 5-10 per cent cut in its January production. It also said it would urge other non-Opec producers, including Norway, to follow suit. The Norwegians, who pumped a record 2.49 million barrels each day from the North Sea in November, were quick to dispel any illusions that the Omani proposal was welcome and last week confirmed that they had no intention of cutting back.

Mehdi Varzi, oil analyst at Kleinwort Benson, reckons there are few ready candidates among the large non-Opec producers. "You have to go back to 1986 to see who co-operated then when the oil price collapsed: China has become a net oil importer, Mexico is in NAFTA and the North Sea is mainly in private hands with companies like BP, Shell and Exxon controlling most of the output."

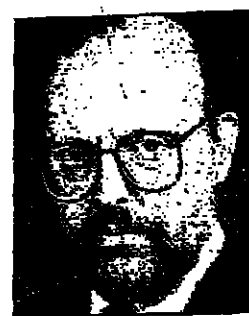
For the UK, lower oil prices have been a boon rather than a problem with the promise of lower energy costs for industry. However, Mr Varzi reckons there is an outside chance that Norway might be susceptible to Opec arguments if the price deteriorated further owing to its heavy dependence on oil revenues and the influence of its state-owned oil companies.

Independent oil exploration and production companies have been instrumental in bringing about the current surge of oil output in the North Sea. But for many, the reward has been plummeting share prices and shaky finances as the profitability of their investments is threatened by the low market price of their product. Lasmo has seen its share price halved. Last year its total cost of production, including depreciation and tax, was more than £8 per barrel leaving the company little margin against an oil price now hovering at £9 per barrel.

Cutting back on production is not an option for most of the exploration and production companies which need the cash generated from production in order to repay borrowings but cut-backs on new investment are a likely consequence. In a statement last week, reviewing cost reduction and debt repayment targets, BP forecast annual capital spend between \$4 billion and \$5 billion but David Simon, BP's chief executive, added a note of caution: "Should margins or oil prices decline, we can exercise our ability to rephase capex accordingly."

The major integrated oil companies such as Shell, Exxon and BP are better placed to deal with price falls because they have downstream businesses that can take advantage of the lower cost of the raw material. Even more importantly, the sheer scale of their operations means that they can maintain profitability through cutting out the fat built up in earlier times, an option not available to the relatively lean exploration companies. Tony Craven Walker, chief executive of Monument Oil & Gas, which owns a share of the Liverpool Bay oil and gas field, reckons that a number of weak companies could be taken out if current conditions continue. "Any forecast is guaranteed to be wrong. But I think we are in a world where we shall see low oil prices for the foreseeable future."

Mr Tweedie's hybrid turkey strains the season of goodwill



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

The old Accounting Standards Committee lost the confidence of big business over inflation accounting. But the last nail was hammered into its coffin when it failed to find a single acceptable way to account for the "goodwill" that arises when one company buys another for more than its balance sheet says it is worth. Industrialists complained that technical accountants were out of touch with their real world. So the goodwill debate was a ghost at the birth of David Tweedie's more widely based Accounting Standards Board — and modern accounting reform.

Professor Tweedie is a technical accountant but certainly not out of touch. He wisely shelved the issue to get on with more important reforms. But it would not go away. Now the ASB has got round to goodwill, it is in just as big a mess as the old ASC. It is more openly split, basically on the same issues, though the two proposals sheepishly presented this morning are much more sophisticated. And it insists one must prevail.

The underlying argument, as in many accounting issues, lies between two approaches. The B/S camp, often reflected in the board's reforms, thinks a company's annual profit and loss account should reflect most changes in net assets between one balance sheet and the next. The P/L camp, long-time business root-rotters, think reported profit should reflect underlying trading transactions and, as Ernst & Young's Ron Paterson recently argued, the balance sheet is primarily "a residual statement which results from the allocation of transactions to different accounting periods".

In the goodwill debate, mirrored in differing views of analysts polled by Price Waterhouse, the B/S camp favours putting goodwill in the balance sheet and depreciating it as required against profits. The prevailing P/L camp prefers writing it off solely against reserves, but has a problem. Takeover kings ran short of reserves. Some wrote off so much to keep earnings charging ahead that even modern-minded analysts and credit raters, who still insist on comparing borrowing with book worth, fretted at what they found. The answer was to put "goodwill" in the balance sheet and keep it there to avoid spoiling profits, often in the guise of brands.

If businesses were worth roughly what was paid for them, buyers argued, should they not have the option of putting the cost in the balance sheet in some way? And if

"goodwill" was really, say, the prime Smirnoff vodka brand, worth many times any bottling plant or distillery that went with it, why should it be written down when it earned more sales and profit each year?

This argument played into the hands of the B/S camp. The result is Mr Tweedie's preferred option. This solves the Smirnoff problem. Mr Tweedie will have nothing to do with intangibles (incidentally making Mirror Group Newspapers look insolvent when it was not). But he allows goodwill to stay in the balance sheet subject to an annual discounted cash flow exercise. Companies often make such DCF calculations to value a business they want to buy. The "discounting" is hideously complex money-making for accountants' firms. But the big snag is that this only suits takeovers of busi-

nesses that will be run separately. That is a minority. It won't work easily for takeovers of competitors or add-ons that will be integrated and lose their separate existence. In the majority of cases, the B/S option insists "goodwill" be depreciated against profits, not written off against reserves. That was the proposal overwhelmingly rejected by business when the ASC tried it three years ago.

As a simple-minded B/S sort of chap, like millions of others, I know the balance sheet cannot value a company, but in an ideal world, I like to dream. It should give an idea of the true capital employed, so that the difference between market value and book worth is some guide to quality of management and the state of trade. Decades of inflation wrecked any such notion in historic cost accounts, and inflation accounting was no answer. But if inflation is to stay low,

we should aim to move back generally in that direction — not just in takeovers. If balance sheets are not comparable, there is no point in some being realistic.

For that purpose, the ASB has not thought fundamentally enough. As Professor William Baxter explained in *The Times* on January 7, the problem lies in the unfortunate word goodwill, which suggests "something too nebulous and fickle to be put alongside trustworthy assets". Hence the drive to write it off. But if the DCF value of a business is more than its book worth, he argued, that does not mean it is earning temporary super-normal profits, merely that the sum is worth more than the parts. He would instal "goodwill" as "the portion of a subsidiary's value not allocated to individual assets". But as the board points out, the transaction test would cause inconsistency, making the book value of a company buying a business higher than a company developing the same business itself. And allowing all companies to revalue their assets on a DCF basis would be pretty radical.

Wheezes devised for companies' convenience point an easier way. If "goodwill" can be allocated, why should it not be capitalised, avoiding legal dictates over goodwill or any need to invoke a "true and fair" override. Accountants are too sniffy about intangibles. A dock is less separable from its business than a whisky brand or a licensable patent. Yet only the dock goes in the balance sheet. And if the ASB finds no generally accepted method to measure such intangibles, does it think hotels should be stripped from balance sheets? Different valuation bases helped cut the value of Queens Moats portfolio by more than half in a year. No, it would demand the more stringent methods plainly needed for intangibles. If a company buying a competitor has the gall to put "enhanced monopoly power" in its balance sheet, let it too justify the figures.

Anything left that cannot be allocated might indeed be written off straight away. If that has to be charged against profit, so be it. It would force acquirers and analysts to confront the short-term cost of long-term benefits and end spurious gymnastics to insulate earnings. That would be in the spirit of Mr Tweedie's reforms. Mechanistic annual depreciation of goodwill reflects no economic reality, would be ignored and undermine the board's reforms of the profit and loss account.

Glad tidings of a low inflation new year

As Christmas approaches, the gilt market sustains the hope that it has had all its problems already. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must think that it is several Christmases rolled into one.

On top of this, there are portents of further glad tidings next year. Is it all a dream? Can the year ahead truly be as good as the heralds say?

Investing in gilts is now all about focus. There are always things to distract you. What about institutional cash flow? Can spreads against other major markets fall any further? What if the foreigners decide not to buy gilts? Isn't there a major political risk surrounding the local and European elections?

In truth, all the factors are next to irrelevant. There is only one significant issue that confronts the gilt investor — do you or do you not believe the sustained low inflation story? If you do not, the time to make a dashed dash for the exit is now, while the others do believe it. If, however, you do, you should ignore all the other factors, sit tight and wait for yields to reach hitherto unimaginable levels.

You can tell that something big (and imperfectly understood) has happened from the behaviour of the forecasters. Nearly all the surprises on inflation have been good ones, and they have been coming thick and fast.

Moreover, nearly every major event, good or bad, seems to have an anti-inflationary silver lining. Gilt is the latest example. When that happens

over a period as long as a year, the evidence that there has been a radical change is overwhelming.

The response of the forecasters (edging down the near-term numbers and pushing the reversal further into the future) tells you something more — the extent to which this radical change is still not in the market.

When the bulk of the forecasts have been wrong, as they have about inflation, what is the poor investor to do? If you are searching for a short cut, the best advice is to take the consensus inflation forecast for the next year and halve it. Why is inflation coming

'Nearly every event, good or bad, seems to have an anti-inflation silver lining'

down? There are three reasons: because productive capacity exceeds aggregate demand; because a series of structural changes in both labour and product markets have made prices (and wages) much more sensitive to demand conditions; and because the squeeze of the last few years and the sight of inflation coming down (and turning negative in the housing market) have finally broken inflationary psychology.

Most people acknowledge the first of these factors. If, however, that's all there is, not much has changed. For the

corollary is bound to be that when demand revives, inflation will pick up again. That is why the forecasts have been, and, in many cases, still are, negative on inflation prospects for next year.

But the force of these other two factors is that inflation can continue to fall, and then stay low, even as the economy improves. That is what we expect — core inflation falling below 2 per cent next year, and looking set to fall further in 1995, even as the economy continues to grow.

Won't the politicians somehow or other "mess it up" — that is to say, sacrifice sound economic management in pursuit of victory at the polls? That is certainly a risk, but we are optimistic, not that we are less cynical about the politicians. Indeed, we may be more cynical. Given that they got the economy right this year by accident, can we have faith in the politicians' ability to "mess it up" intentionally?

Yet this is the season of goodwill to all men — even politicians. They, too, should be allowed, as they munch their Christmas turkey, to bask in the prospect of several years of non-inflationary growth, with base rates next year reaching 4 per cent and long gilt yields down to 5.75 per cent. Come to think of it, what about the turkey? Are you paying any more for yours this year than last? You won't next year either.

ROGER BOOTLE
Greenwell Montagu
Gilt-Edged

THE TIMES TRAVELEX CURRENCY CALL SERVICE

Buy your foreign currency over the telephone. 48 hour delivery anywhere in mainland UK. To obtain the up-to-the-minute tourist rate of exchange on a wide range of currencies and to contact the Travlex dealing desk

PHONE 0839-33-83-33

11.15-12.00 (Mon-Fri) 12.00-12.30 (Sat)

12.30-1.00 (Mon-Fri) 1.00-1.30 (Sat)

1.30-2.00 (Mon-Fri) 2.00-2.30 (Sat)

2.30-3.00 (Mon-Fri) 3.00-3.30 (Sat)

3.30-4.00 (Mon-Fri) 4.00-4.30 (Sat)

4.30-5.00 (Mon-Fri) 5.00-5.30 (Sat)

5.30-6.00 (Mon-Fri) 6.00-6.30 (Sat)

6.30-7.00 (Mon-Fri) 7.00-7.30 (Sat)

7.30-8.00 (Mon-Fri) 8.00-8.30 (Sat)

8.30-9.00 (Mon-Fri) 9.00-9.30 (Sat)

9.30-10.00 (Mon-Fri) 10.00-10.30 (Sat)

10.30-11.00 (Mon-Fri) 11.00-11.30 (Sat)

11.30-12.00 (Mon-Fri) 12.00-12.30 (Sat)

12.30-1.00 (Mon-Fri) 1.00-1.30 (Sat)

1.30-2.00 (Mon-Fri) 2.00-2.30 (Sat)

2.30-3.00 (Mon-Fri) 3.00-3.30 (Sat)

3.30-4.00 (Mon-Fri) 4.00-4.30 (Sat)

4.30-5.00 (Mon-Fri) 5.00-5.30 (Sat)

5.30-6.00 (Mon-Fri) 6.00-6.30 (Sat)

6.30-7.00 (Mon-Fri) 7.00-7.30 (Sat)

7.30-8.00 (Mon-Fri) 8.00-8.30 (Sat)

8.30-9.00 (Mon-Fri) 9.00-9.30 (Sat)

9.30-10.00 (Mon-Fri) 10.00-10.30 (Sat)

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Cisco kid rides off to new job

WITH its goal of securing a successor to the United Securities Market, achieved, the City Group for Smaller Companies (Ciscos) is losing its figurehead, Richard Balakias, co-founder of Ciscos a year ago, is quitting as chief executive to join BZW, to work on special projects. It is a mixed blessing for Ciscos: it loses a chief executive, but wins a valuable member in BZW. Membership has risen from 17 to more than 130 in the past year. Until August 1992, Balakias advised the Stock Exchange on how to attract small, growing companies. He will remain involved with Ciscos. Three City lobby groups now have leadership vacancies. Proshare, the wider share ownership campaign, needs a chief executive to replace Geoffrey Maddrell, who is to become chairman, and the Association of Private Client Investment Managers and Stockbrokers, is losing its chief executive, Michael Baker. Should keep the headhunters busy...

Spirit moves them
SHANDWICK. Peter Gummer's City PR company, starts today in its new Queen Street

Levitt levity on the cards

Ah, memories... Roger Levitt, now making toy trains for children as a punishment for misleading Fimbra, the City regulator, is unlikely to be sending so many Christmas cards this year. This example from our archives features Levitt in his heyday, posing with superimposed Santa and reappearing on a staircase that looks remarkably like the one in the RAC Club, in St James's, where once he was a member. A bottle of champagne is on offer to *The Times City Diary* reader who comes up with the best caption...



base after a chaotic weekend that saw a panoply of old office items auctioned for charity. Everything from a 25p bat-stand to a booze cabinet was sold, raising about £1,500 for Centrepont, a charity for London's homeless. Keenest bidding was for the office sofa, which drew the keen attention of a secretary wishing to buy it for her director. What the Shandwick mob will not miss at Fredericks Place, near Old

Jewry, home for 12 years, is the ghost reputed to stalk its corridors. One recalls: "One night, a former director and his secretary were working late on a press document, and each claimed later to have separately seen the shrouded figure near the photocopier. They did not tell each other at the time, apparently, because of what the other one might think." The ghost of profit warnings

The City has been toasting soaring shares in familiar style. Last week, a group of City slickers at Carney & Barrow's bar overlooking Broadgate Circle splashed out the best part of £1,000 on a case of 1982 Vintage Krug champagne — and then left a £96 tip. The champagne house has had to rush fresh supplies to the Square Mile to keep up with demand.

JON ASHWORTH

مكذوب الأصل

ASB fails
to agree
goodwill
standard

By SARAH BAGNALL

THE Accounting Standards Board has failed to agree an accounting treatment for goodwill arising in takeovers, three years after the previous standard set by the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

The board's nine members, including industry representatives, are almost equally split between two alternatives, drawn from six treatments presented for discussion. But they insist one standard method must be chosen. The ASB is calling on interested parties to help it decide.

None of the choices would permit intangible assets such as brand names, publishing titles, trade marks or drug patents to be valued separately from goodwill in company accounts. This is practised by many big companies.

New rules are needed because the goodwill element in prices paid in bids and deals — the excess of purchase cost over the fair value of fixed assets and net working capital — has grown sharply to average more than 40 per cent. Usually, a buyer immediately writes off goodwill against reserves, a method that protects profits. The alternative of writing it off gradually against profits, proposed by the former Accounting Standards Committee, is rarely used.

In its discussion paper *Goodwill and Intangible Assets*, published today, the board concentrates on two options: □ A combination of the ASC's idea, that goodwill should generally be capitalised and then amortised over no more than 20 years, with a second option of making a complex annual review instead to see if the value of the goodwill has fallen. Companies would then have to write down goodwill only when there had been a loss in value. In 1990, the ASC found that 93 per cent of respondents were against its simple proposal, while 68 per cent supported the annual review approach.

□ As a variant on writing off goodwill immediately, it would be transferred to a separate goodwill write-off reserve on acquisition.

A survey of leading analysts published in *The Times* today, shows a strong desire for an agreed reform.

City seeks reform, page 33
Graham Seal, page 34



Greg Dyke, chief executive, and Sir Christopher Bland, chairman, focus on Granada's "thin and unconvincing" offer in their defence of LWT

LWT attacks Granada
for lack of experience

By JON ASHWORTH

LONDON Weekend Television has attacked Granada's hostile £600 million bid as an opportunistic move by a conglomerate that knows little about television.

In its defence document, published today, LWT (Holdings) attacks Granada's growth record and diversity, and criticises the lack of TV experience among its directors. It makes no forecasts about profits or dividends, but confirms talks are under way with Yorkshire-Tyne Tees over a possible takeover bid.

Sir Christopher Bland, the LWT chairman who angrily rejected Granada's overtures when they became public a fortnight ago, said the arguments for the offer were "thin and unconvincing". Sir Christopher said: "The business case for their bid appears extremely weak. We believe

LWT shareholders have seen a 631 per cent increase in the value of their investments since December 1989, compared with a 61 per cent increase for Granada shareholders

shareholders should not exchange their investment in a television company as valuable as LWT, either for shares in a conglomerate or for an inadequate cash alternative."

Granada said the defence document contained nothing new and would confuse LWT shareholders. It said the logic of a merger of the two companies was compelling.

LWT will provide shareholders with a profit and dividend forecast for 1993 early in the new year. The defence document confirms that LWT is holding preliminary talks with Yorkshire-Tyne Tees over a possible takeover bid, but offers no

clues to the state of a rumoured "East Coast Alliance", under which LWT would bid for Yorkshire while spinning off Tyne Tees to Anglia Television. Such a move would thwart Granada because no television company is allowed to hold more than two franchises.

LWT has seized on the "few apparent synergies" of Granada's interests, which range from television rental and computer services to motorway service stations, nightclubs, and Granada Television. It claims that rental, which represents more than 50 per cent of Granada's 1993 operating profit, is in long-

term decline. The market for television sets and video recorders is becoming saturated. "Granada has sought to adapt to the market trend towards sales rather than rentals, while cutting costs rigorously; the division is running hard to stand still."

Granada's profit record and dividend policy is singled out for attack. The group lifted pre-tax profits £61 million to £176 million in the year to October 2. LWT says the growth followed a decline in profits in 1990 and "significant" losses in 1991. The 1993 dividend of 8.75p per share is more than 10 per cent below Granada's 1987 payout.

The value of LWT's shares has increased 631 per cent since December 1989, against a 61 per cent rise by Granada. But Granada can claim credit for boosting LWT's shares, which were trading at about 375p before Granada took a

stake in the company in June. LWT's shares closed at 599p on Friday. Granada's offer values the shares at 622p, with a 528p cash alternative.

LWT claims to be the third largest ITV company by share of net advertising revenue. It attacks the timing of Granada's bid, pointing to the possible future relaxation of cross-media ownership rules that would allow companies such as Pearson to join the fray.

Granada was dismissive of LWT's defence. Gerry Robinson, chief executive, said: "LWT shareholders will be confused by this document. LWT have admitted that increased scale is necessary, yet they are rejecting the only logical combination in terms of advertising revenue, audience size, financial strength and licence payments."

He noted that 90 per cent of last night's prime-time shows on LWT were made by Granada.

Abu Dhabi
funds used to
prop up BCCI,
lawyers say

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

LAWYERS acting for the rulers of Abu Dhabi, majority shareholders of the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International, have proof that Abu Dhabi funds worth between \$2.6 billion and \$3.9 billion were used over a period of nine years to prop up the bank's fraudulent activities.

The evidence, uncovered by Simmons & Simmons, the law firm acting for the Abu Dhabi, in a search lasting two-and-a-half years, might be used in future actions against 12 senior officials of the bank or against BCCI itself in the form of action against its liquidators.

From Touche Ross, the accountant, Abu Dhabi claims to be one of BCCI's biggest creditors as well as the majority shareholder, with 77 per cent of shares.

The likelihood of litigation between the liquidators and the Abu Dhabi has increased since the Luxembourg appeal court rejected a \$1.7 billion compensation agreement for creditors from Abu Dhabi.

However, talks have restarted between the two sides, giving hope that a new agreement can be reached.

The Simmons & Simmons work was done to attempt to establish the credentials of the Abu Dhabi rulers' claim that they rank as priority creditors, ahead of unsecured creditors.

In April 1981, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan and Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al Nahyan opened a deposit account with BCCI's Cayman Islands operation, International Credit and Investment Company (ICIC). Between 1981 and 1990, the Abu Dhabi ruling family put \$2.6 billion into this portfolio account of private funds. The management of the account and investment of the funds was entrusted to Agha Hasan Abedi, the founder and president of BCCI.

The instruction that Mr Abedi's signature was required for any transfer of funds from the account seems to have been ignored. He left its management to his most trusted deputy, Swaleh Naqvi.

The Abu Dhabi believe most of the money, as well as accruing interest, was misappropriated by Mr Abedi. Mr

Naqvi and ten senior officials, Simmons & Simmons has built up 150 files of evidence, tracking the misappropriation of funds from the portfolio between 1981 and 1990. It has documents showing 100 transfers of funds from the account.

Much of the evidence is in the form of file notes in the handwriting of senior BCCI officials, apparently memos detailing where the money had actually gone.

These often coincided with statements showing the same sums, sent to the Abu Dhabi. These statements contained a fictional summary of investments, including money on deposit, certificates of deposit, Treasury bonds, BCCI shares, and Credit and Commerce American Holdings shares.

David Sandy, a partner in Simmons & Simmons, said: "By the end of 1989, the portfolio was looted to extinction." He said the money was used to fund non-performing loans, fictitious loans, finance for the Gulf Group, a loss-making BCCI client, and to bolster up BCCI's loss-making treasury division.

By 1990, Mr Naqvi was forced to explain the loss to the Abu Dhabi, because it became impossible to hide the losses any longer. By then, only \$160 million remained in a UBS deposit account controlled by Mr Abedi and \$94 million in deposit accounts in BCCI and its subsidiaries.

A progress report from Mr Naqvi to the Abu Dhabi on the handover of the portfolio account shows that assets worth \$2.336 billion had disappeared. Of the remaining supposed value of the account of \$2.02 billion, \$1.359 billion was in BCCI shares, which were effectively worthless.

Civil proceedings brought on behalf of Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Khalifa and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority against 13 former BCCI executives begin in Abu Dhabi today. The 13 are already on trial in the criminal courts.

Mr Abedi is being tried in his absence. Mr Naqvi is in custody in Abu Dhabi. He has been charged with 19 counts of fraud and conspiracy by the United Arab Emirates.

Japan copies the spirit of Christmas

By IOLA SMITH

JAPAN is turning its attention to marketing Western culture. And it is starting with Christmas. At Felissimo department store on 5th Avenue, New York, and at a chateau on the outskirts of Paris, unique Japanese-made Christmas gifts are being sold.

The products are based on an authentic Christmas archive of 60,000 items, including cribs, cards and decorations from eastern Germany and Poland, that the Felissimo Corporation of Osaka acquired in December 1991 for £1 million from Count Andrew and Countess

Maria von Stauffer of Herefordshire.

Felissimo promised to do some expensive restoration work and display the collection. By honouring the commitment, Felissimo is becoming the biggest name in Christmas in Japan — and is breaking into the lucrative US and European Christmas markets. Countess von Stauffer said: "Felissimo is planning for the long term. It is starting by introducing giftware items aimed at the 18-25 age group. Then, as they become parents, Christmas orientated toys will be produced."



Count and Countess von Stauffer with their collection

Share options make
Fisons directors £5m

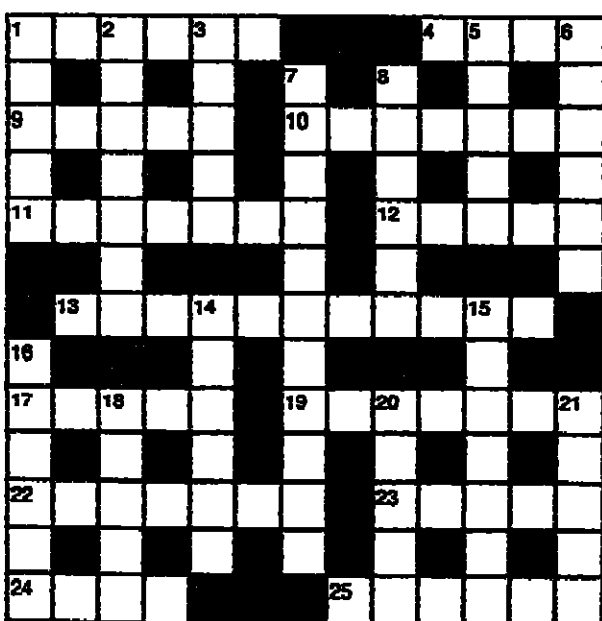
By PHILIP PANGALOS

FORMER directors of Fisons, the pharmaceuticals and scientific equipment group, received £5.3 million as a result of past share option sales. The revelation comes a week after the company sacked Cedric Scroggs as chief executive and announced a large restructuring that will erase all this year's profits.

The former directors benefited from Fisons' inflated peak profits when earnings were boosted by the legal manipulation of profits, which encouraged wholesalers to take stock at the year-end through discounts, and book-

ing the profits at a 70 per cent margin.

In 1991, when the manipulation was at its height, a number of senior executives and directors cashed in share options granted in 1988. About £2 million of the £5.3 million was shared by five directors, who exercised options in April 1991 at 253p and sold the shares at 491p, not far from 1991's £5 peak. The shares have since fallen to 112p. Main beneficiaries included John Kerridge, former chairman and chief executive, said to have made £750,000, and Mr Scroggs, £380,000.



CROSSWORD ENTHUSIASTS: The Times Concise Crosswords — Book 1 & 2 (Special Edition 240 puzzles) £5.74 each. Books 3 & 4 £4.25 each. The Times Junior Crosswords — Book 1 £5.25, Book 2 £5.99, Concise Book 1 £5.99. The Times Crosswords — Books 1 to 13 £4.74 each. Books 14 to 16 £4.25 each. The Sunday Times Crosswords — Books 1 to 10 £4.74 each. Book 11 £4.25. Concise Books 1 & 2 £4.25 each. Prices inc p&p £1.95. Cheques in £/pounds. Tel: 0181 552 4755 (24 hrs). No credit cards.

Just released for Christmas: The Times Crosswords — Book 17. The Times Concise Crosswords — Book 5. The Sunday Times Crosswords — Book 12. £4.25 each.

TIMES TWO
CROSSWORD

NO 43

ACROSS

- 1 Activities (6)
- 4 Take-off (4)
- 9 Betting game (5)
- 10 Japanese flower-arranging (7)
- 11 Rash person (7)
- 12 Intermittent (5)
- 13 Harmless pressure outlet (6,5)
- 17 Dealings (5)
- 19 Asthma-relieving apparatus (7)
- 22 Muslim veil (7)
- 23 Kenish castle (8)
- 24 Girl, OT book (4)
- 25 Sprightly (6)

DOWN

- 1 Profundity (5)
- 2 Zulu political movement (7)
- 3 Feed to excess (5)
- 5 Deck Jack (5)
- 6 Gratitude (4)
- 7 Disc-flipping game (6-5)
- 8 Small nocturnal jumping rodent (6)
- 14 Inuit (6)
- 15 Feudal peasant (7)
- 16 Racehorse for longer distances (6)
- 18 Overturned (5)
- 20 Board game with leaping pieces (5)
- 21 Hazardous (5)

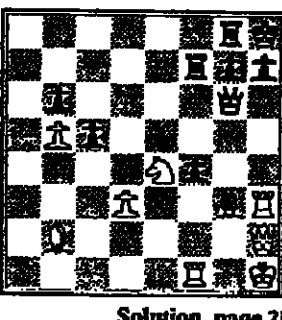
SOLUTION TO NO 42

ACROSS: 1 Card 4 Crackers 8 Charcoal 9 Also 10 Apple 11 Classic 13 Turkey 15 Carrel 18 Nursery 20 Squaw 23 Open 24 Gardenia 25 Presence 26 Tree
DOWN: 2 Athos 3 Derrack 4 Cook 5 All Black 6 Kvass 7 Respite 10 Act 12 Hydrogen 14 Usurper 16 Request 17 Low 19 Sinus 21 Affire 22 Tree

WARNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

This position is from the game Spraggett - Speelman, Hastings Premier 1989/90. Here, White played 1 Ng3? missing a brilliant finish. Can you see how an alternative move of the white knight would have ended the game? At this year's Hastings tournament, England is represented by John Nunn, Matthew Sadler, Mark Hebden and Michael Hennigan.



Solution, page 21

WORDWATCHING

By Philip Howard

LABARUM

- a. An evergreen shrub
- b. The imperial standard
- c. A monk's library

DEMOT

- a. An Athenian citizen
- b. To remain silent
- c. A half bottle of port

Answers on page 21

CASHING IN
YOUR
ENDOWMENT?

WE BUY WITH PROFITS ENDOWMENTS AND WHOLE LIFE POLICIES AT SUBSTANTIAL PREMIUMS ABOVE SURRENDER VALUE. THE POLICY MUST HAVE BEEN IN FORCE FOR AT LEAST 7 YEARS. THERE ARE NO HIDDEN FEES.

30% Above Surrender
Value Often Paid

Telephone: 081 207 1666 Fax: 081 207 4950

- 1 Insurance Company
- 2 Basic Sum Assured
- 3 Start Date of Policy
- 4 Maturity Date of Policy
- 5 Gross Monthly Premium
- 6 Total Bonus Attaching
- 7 Surrender Value

FOR AN IMMEDIATE QUOTE TELEPHONE, FAX OR RETURN THE COUPON WITH THE INFORMATION INDICATED.

NAME (Mr/Mrs/Miss)

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

TELEPHONE NO.

SECURITISED
ENDOWMENT
CONTRACTS PLC

SEC House, 49 Theobald Street, Birmingham, Herts. WD6 4RZ

No. 04522

New Ru

Zh

wa

to

FROM ANNE

IN MOSCOW

VLADIMIR

RUSSIA

Democrat

terrible

with

established

enemies

seek

in such

He said

establish

tions on a

concentrating

the Soviet

Afghanistan

Middle East

and in the

"Why are

what Britain

of us? He said

warning

problems

Russia

In the first

a shift in

after the

reforms

in elections

economic

of the

Russia's

China

Becker
turns
on her
critics

By KATE ALLEN

ARRIVING home with a sick and wounded British soldier, Sally Becker, the former versal freemason and writer from Home, East Sussex, was sharply criticised by those who questioned the success of her mission.

She hit out at UN critics saying they wish I didn't go ahead with these missions. I will carry on. I don't know why they say I deflect the real issue in Bosnia: until recently, the media had turned away from the conflict.

The UN's record proves they were not able to do without us. I have heard they said they would have done it without Sally Becker, well why don't they bloody do it?

Ms Becker praised the cooperation of the "British" UN troops in Vukovar, but accused a UN team of having taken 50 of the ambulances and two of the trucks full of aid.

Sally at last, page 5

INDEX

Check

Crossword

Leading articles

Letters

Obituary

Weather

TV & Radio

مكتبة من الاصل